

23 December 2021

Tip sheet 9:

Emergency management of a COVID-19 outbreak

Tips in the event of an outbreak

- In the event of an outbreak, promptly isolate and inform COVID-19 positive cases.
- Immediate notifications are required within one hour:
 - Notify your [Local Public Health Unit](#) by phone: 1300 651 160 or email: publichealth.operations@dhhs.vic.gov.au
 - Report outbreak to the Australian Department of Health by email: agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au
- Activate your outbreak management plan:
 - Leadership to emphasise and reinforce the plan
 - Cohort residents and staff (visit agedcarequality.gov.au for cohorting FAQs)
 - Have a communication plan for residents, staff and stakeholders
 - Infection prevention and control
 - Monitor residents for signs and symptoms
 - Entry screening
- Manage workforce and enact contingencies if required.
- Ensure your facility has at least one weeks' worth of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Helpful resources

- Advice from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission in the [Flow chart for managing COVID-19](#).
- [First 24 hours – managing COVID-19 in a residential aged care facility](#).
- [Managing a COVID-19 outbreak in residential aged care](#).

- The [Communicable Diseases Network Australia guidelines](#) for the prevention, control and public health management of the COVID-19 outbreaks in residential aged care facilities provides information on the supplies needed to manage an outbreak.
- [Australian Department of Health information](#) to broadly prepare for COVID-19 in residential aged care.
- [National COVID-19 Residential Aged Care Emergency Communication Guide](#).

Other things to consider

- You will need wrist bands for residents.
- You will need:
 - PPE for staff
 - to be able to set up places to put on and take off PPE
 - places to store additional PPE stocks.
- Check your supply of equipment and signs. You should also have a plan to manage contaminated clinical waste.
- Plan how you will organise residents in different scenarios and how staff will access those areas. Consider the layout of your facility and the implications for staff and equipment.
- Identify how you will need to adjust care delivery and services in the event of an outbreak. You will need separate equipment for each zone.
- You will receive lots of telephone calls as entry to your facility will be controlled. Make sure you can provide additional phone numbers and staff to cope with the volume of calls.
- Catering and laundry services will also be affected. Think about what disposable equipment you may need, such as disposable crockery.
- You will need line lists for your staff.

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN) was established by the Australian Government to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services, reduce fragmentation of care and improve health outcomes for everyone, especially for the most vulnerable. Australia is divided into 31 PHNs. NWMPHN is the biggest of Victoria's 6 PHNs with a catchment of about 1.7 million people covering highly diverse communities from Melbourne's CBD and inner city to the rapidly growing suburbs in the north and west. Visit our website nwmphn.org.au

Before you go, if you would like to contribute your tips and tricks to help others in residential aged care facilities please contact agedcaresupport@nwmphn.org.au

Also consider subscribing to our [COVID-19 e-bulletins for general practices](#) which will help keep you on top of the rapidly changing situation. If you need further help, email agedcaresupport@nwmphn.org.au

All the tips sheets for residential aged care facilities are available on the [COVID-19 aged care support page](#) on our website.