

General Practitioner Fact sheet

Vulnerable population groups in community settings

This information will assist General Practitioners (GPs) in providing care to vulnerable people living within a community, residential or supported accommodation.

Further information can be obtained from the '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) resources for health professionals, including aged care providers, pathology providers and healthcare managers](#)' page on the Australian Government Department for Health Website.

Latest information on COVID-19 is available at: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019.

Information specific to people with disabilities

People with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is important to ensure that they (and/or their family, carer, guardian or advocate) have access to information:

- > Resources for participants of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) phone 1800 800 110 or www.ndis.gov.au
- > Resources for providers NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission online training module and provider alerts: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-information
- > Resources for client and family education: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/covid-19-people-disability>

Planning visits to a person's home, residential or supported accommodation facility

- > Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB) has developed guidelines for testing.
- > Ensure that visits are only essential and determine whether care be appropriately delivered via distance means, such as via telehealth consultation. It may be appropriate to have a carer, guardian, family or staff member present.
- > If telehealth is deemed suitable, please ensure the patient has the adequate device(s) to access the telehealth platform, and is able to understand how to use them. A carer or guardian may be able to assist with this.
- > Consider if signing for medications or attending the facility is essential.

Prior to the visit

It is recommended that a routine risk assessment is conducted prior to home visiting and document in the patient's medical record.

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- > If person is at risk of having COVID-19 consider a test. Find [COVID-19 Clinics and Testing Centres](#) and use the [What should you do flowchart](#) to determine if the patient needs to be tested.

During the visit, if the patient is well:

- > Routine Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is NOT required if people have been assessed appropriately for COVID-19 and do not meet the criteria for a suspected or confirmed case.
- > Provide advice to the patient and their family or visitors on social distancing and avoiding group activities and where to find trusted resources on COVID-19.

During the visit, if the patient is unwell, but does not have COVID-19 symptoms as per the CDCB guidelines:

- > Conduct the usual clinical assessment and intervention required for the patient.

During the visit, the patient is unwell and is displaying potential COVID-19 symptoms as per the CDCB guidelines:

- > Follow infection control procedures. If PPE is available and testing can be safely undertaken, these patients should be tested at the time.
- > If testing cannot occur at the time, testing options are available via [COVID-19 Clinics and Testing Centres](#).
- > A phone call to CDCB **1300 232 272** is encouraged to discuss any concerns.
- > If there is a concern that the patient is clinically unwell and unstable, a discussion should occur with the relevant Emergency Department (ED) and SAAS personnel.
- > Whilst awaiting test results, the patient must self-isolate until the results are returned. They can be provided with the [Patient Information Pack – Positive Test for Coronavirus](#).
- > An assessment of the person's ability to remain at home is required. Use the [risk assessment process for home self-isolation of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient for more information](#).
- > A clear plan for results and follow-up needs to be established with the patient and carers/ staff.

What is close contact?

Close contact is defined as meeting the following criteria:

- > Greater than 15 minutes face-to-face contact over a one week period (15 minutes is accumulative over a one week period) in any setting with a confirmed person who is COVID-19 positive in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed case.
- > Sharing a closed space with a confirmed case for a prolonged period (e.g. more than two hours) in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed case.
- > 'Isolation guidance' information sheets can be found at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019.

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Resources and links

There are a number of resources which may assist in providing information to vulnerable patient groups listed below.

Disability

- > NDIS [easy read factsheet on COVID-19](#).
- > The COVID-19 easy read factsheet is also [available in Auslan](#).
- > The NDIS website has recently launched a [Coronavirus website](#).

Housing/Homelessness

- > According to the [SA Housing Authority](#), if a person is homeless or at risk of homelessness, they may not be able to maintain the social distance or hygiene practices that are so vital to reducing the spread of COVID-19 more generally.
- > Emergency accommodation is available in metropolitan and regional areas.
- > To access housing services, call the 24-hour Homelessness Gateway on **1800 003 308**.

Urgent Short Term Accommodation Support

Self-Quarantine Community and Self Isolating (not able to isolate within own residence or under hardship circumstances)

- > SA Housing Authority, as the Emergency Relief Functional Support Group under the state emergency management arrangements, will supply appropriate emergency accommodation to those who require accommodation support and are in self-quarantine or not able to isolate within a fixed residential address.
- > **The COVID-19 Relief Call Centre:** 1300 705 336, available from 8:30am – 5:30pm seven days a week.
- > **State COVID-19 hotline:** 1800 253 787
- > Both hotlines can be accessed by the community and health professionals.

Mental Health

- > [Mental Health and COVID-19](#)
- > **Red Cross Telecross REDi – 1800 188 071**
Red Cross Australia as an existing partner in the provision of provision of Psychological First Aid will implement the Telecross REDi program for those who are under self-quarantine/isolation. Individuals can register for a call back welfare service over the time of isolation or quarantine. If individuals require Psychological First Aid during the call, Red Cross can refer into mental health pathways, should they be required.
The Red Cross Telecross REDi service is available Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm for registration and the calls will be made to registered clients Monday to Saturday 9.00am to Saturday 5.00pm.
- > **SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line – 1800 632 753**
For mental health support by phone and video in relation to COVID-19, the SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line is available 8.00am to 8.00pm, seven days a week. This service can also provide follow-up calls.

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- > **COVID-19 Mental Health Peer Support Program – 1800 022 020**
This service is run by people with a lived experience of mental health and is operational from 5pm to 11.30pm.
- > **Mental Health Triage – 13 14 65**
For assistance in a mental health emergency, contact the mental health triage service. Available 24 hours, seven days a week.
- > **GROW – 1800 558 268 or www.grow.org.au**
GROW supports a range of online 'eGroups' to people facing isolation and mental health problems.
- > Other useful resources include:
 - LIFELINE** – 13 11 14 (suicide and crisis support)
 - BEYOND BLUE** – 1800 512 348
 - HEADSPACE** – National Office (03) 9027 0100 (mental health support for young people)
 - KIDS HELPLINE** – 1800 55 1800

For more information

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019



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IF PRINTED THIS FACTSHEET MAY BE OUT OF DATE

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