

Guidance Information

Interim Advice on Home Visits to Mental Health Consumers

A range of information (fact sheets) and other resources (apps and online learning modules) are available from <https://www.health.gov.au/resources>. These are generic resources and not necessarily fully developed for application in mental health care settings.

The general advice for health and aged care workers can be found at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-health-care-and-residential-care-workers>

The advice contained here is supplementary and will be reviewed regularly as information on COVID-19 and the spread of the virus in the SA community becomes available.

If you have been Interstate or Returned from Overseas

Anyone who has returned from anywhere overseas, or has been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19, is required to self-isolate for 14 days.

From midday on Tuesday 24 March, this requirement will also apply to anyone, including health care workers, returning from interstate to South Australia.

If a staff member develops symptoms, including a fever and cough, you should immediately and urgently seek medical attention. Call your GP first and then determine if you need to have a COVID-19 test.

Home Visits

Wherever possible, direct contacts with mental health consumers and carers should be minimised to protect them from the COVID-19 virus. Mental health consumers and carers are one of the more vulnerable groups in the community due to the presence of co-morbid conditions.

Telephone, SMS and services such as Skype, Zoom and other online video platforms should be used wherever possible.

If a home visit is essential, then the following precautions are recommended:

- > Prior to the home visit, undertake a screening questionnaire (below) with the consumer and, if they are present, the carer. If there are other persons in the household, then the screening questions should also be asked of them.
- > If there are no risks identified from the screening, the home visit should then be arranged to occur preferably outdoors (veranda, outdoor shaded/covered area) or in a large room where social distancing (1.5 meters apart) can be applied.
- > The mental health care worker should use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before entering and on leaving the home visit.
- > Surgical masks are not required for the consumer or the mental health worker.
- > Following the visit, thorough hand washing with soap or hand sanitising must be undertaken.



Standard COVID-19 Screening Questions

1. Have you travelled from overseas or from interstate in the last 14 days?
2. Have you had contact with a person who is a known or possible COVID-19 case?
 - a. If yes, when and who was this person?
3. Do you have or have you had in the past 3 days any of the following:
 - a. Fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$) or history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills)
 - b. Sore throat
 - c. Cough
 - d. Shortness of breath

If yes to any of these, then postpone the home visit until at least 3 days post symptoms.

** The CBIS Novel respiratory pathogen screening tool (PATHGN) is available for CALHN Mental Health staff on the Service Plan screen.

Can food and water spread coronavirus?

Some coronaviruses can potentially survive in the gastrointestinal tract, however, food-borne spread has not been documented. With good food preparation and good hand hygiene, it is highly unlikely that you will become infected with coronavirus through food.

Drinking water in Australia is high quality and is well treated. It is not anticipated that drinking water will be affected by coronavirus.

How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and keeping your distance from others when you are sick is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- > Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub, especially before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.
- > Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- > Avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).
- > Exercise personal responsibility for social distancing measures.

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