Questions and answers about visiting Queensland residential aged care facilities

To protect people who live in residential aged care facilities from coronavirus (COVID-19), visits to facilities have been restricted.

Who can visit a residential aged care facility?
To protect our most vulnerable, the ONLY people who can visit residents in aged care homes are:

- aged care staff (including administration staff, cleaners, tradesman, gardeners and maintenance)
- volunteers
- persons delivering goods and services (including food deliveries)
- health care workers
- a prospective resident
- emergency workers and police
- a visitor who is providing care and support
- a visitor who is providing end-of-life support.

Can I visit a loved one in a residential aged care facility?
Yes, but limit the visit to two hours and once per day. A support person can provide care and support to the person they are visiting, including physical care and support.

How can we support our loved ones when we shouldn’t visit?
It’s important to stay connected with residents. Keep in touch by:

- phone calls
- video calls
- sending letters and postcards
- sending artwork
- sending home videos.
Who CANNOT enter a residential aged care facility?
You must not enter if you

- have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
- had contact with a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- visited a COVID-19 hotspot in the last 14 days
- have a fever (37.5 degrees or more)
- have a cough, runny nose, sore throat or breathing difficulties
- after 1 May 2020, have not had the 2020 flu vaccination (unless it is unavailable to you, for example, you are allergic to the vaccine)
- are under 16 years of age, unless you’re visiting a resident to provide end of life support.

What should I do when I enter a residential aged care facility to work, volunteer, visit, or to provide end-of-life support?
You should:

- stay for a short time in the resident’s room or outside
- avoid communal spaces
- make sure the resident has no more than two visitors at a time, including doctors
- wash your hands before entering and leaving the facility
- stay 1.5 metres away from residents where possible
- stay away when unwell.

Can I stay longer than 2 hours if providing end-of-life-support to the resident?
Yes. The 2 hour time limit does not apply if providing support during end-of-life.

Does everyone entering a residential aged care facility need to be vaccinated against the flu?
Yes. From 1 May 2020 you need to have had the 2020 flu vaccination to be able to enter a residential aged care facility.

This applies to staff, visitors, health care workers, volunteers and others (e.g. cleaners, tradesman, gardeners and maintenance staff).
What if I am unable to be vaccinated against the flu?
If you are unable to have the flu vaccination you can continue to work at or visit a resident in a residential aged care facility provided you:
• stay for a short time in the resident’s room or outside
• avoid communal spaces
• make sure the resident has no more than two visitors at a time, including doctors
• wash your hands before entering and leaving the facility
• stay 1.5 metres away from residents where possible
• stay away when unwell.

What is an up to date flu vaccination?
The flu vaccine is formulated differently each year depending on the circulating influenza virus strains. You are not adequately protected against the flu until you have been vaccinated with the current year’s vaccine. The 2020 flu vaccination is the most up to date flu vaccine available.

Why can’t people under 16 years of age enter?
Children can be asymptomatic when they have COVID-19. This can pose a serious risk to elderly people. People under 16 years of age can only enter a residential aged care facility to visit a resident who is at their end-of-life.

My loved one has dementia and doesn’t understand what’s happening.
Talk to the residential aged care facility and discuss ways you can safely support your loved one.