

Infection prevention & healthcare facilities

Visiting a hospital or care facility



ACIPC

Australasian College
for Infection Prevention and Control

How can you protect people you are visiting in a hospital, residential aged care facility or rehabilitation hospital?

You should always adhere to the directions of the facility and health care workers.

We all want to visit loved ones in hospital, residential aged care or rehabilitation facilities. It is important to protect your loved ones and the health care workers within these facilities. Only visit when you are well. Stay home and do not visit if you are sick or have had any symptoms within the last three days that could include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea/loose bowels, fever (or feeling feverish), an uncontrolled cough or tickle in the throat, or a rash.



These are the things you should be aware of if visiting someone when you are well:

Wash your hands often - before and after visiting

Make sure everyone that visits washes their hands. Clean your hands after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, after using the toilet, and before and after eating or drinking.

Human metapneumovirus and Adenovirus can cause symptoms that look like a cold symptoms but it can also turn into pneumonia. It spreads when someone coughs or sneezes and then touches someone with their contaminated hands.

Wear surgical masks if requested by staff

Remove the masks when leaving patient/resident care areas, and if you touch the mask, replace it.

Remember to get your yearly flu shot

The flu (or influenza) can cause severe illness and sometimes death in long-term care residents.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) causes severe flu-like symptoms. It also spreads when someone coughs or sneezes and then touches someone with their contaminated hands.

Gastroenteritis or stomach 'germs' are caused by viruses that can spread like wildfire amongst residents in long-term care communities. Norovirus, the most common cause of gastro, causes severe nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve, and do not sit on the resident's bed or handle the equipment.

Recognise when you think you are getting sick

Staying away is the best thing you can do as you are most infectious during the first 24-48 hours of getting a cold or flu.

Dirty laundry may be the responsibility of family or friends

It is important that you wash your hands as soon as you have touched the laundry items. Ensure when taking laundry home, that it is in a sealed plastic bag that can be thrown out in the normal household rubbish bin once empty. Remember to use a warm wash cycle but if cold wash is all you have then make sure the washing is placed outside on the line to dry in the sun (the sun kills the germs) or use the hot cycle of your clothes drier.



All you need is a common sense approach and this will reduce everyone's risk.

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