



27 April 2023

## Let's keep residents and each other safe from viruses Do not visit if you have cold or flu symptoms

Dear families and friends of St Basil's NSW/ACT,

With the Winter season upon us, and an increase in viruses across the community it's important to take extra precautions in keeping residents and each other free of viruses.

In an effort to prevent, control and minimise the spread of viruses to resident and staff at St Basil's Homes, we ask that representatives, family and friends who wish to visit their loved one take extra precautions before visiting.

As is the case with many viruses, it can take several days for symptoms to develop so having good hand hygiene and wearing a surgical mask when visiting St Basil's, even if you don't have symptoms, will help to reduce the risk of potentially infecting residents.

In particular, the most prominent viruses that can cause health issues for the elderly and are highly-contagious include COVID, influenza (flu) and gastroenteritis (gastro). Information on each of these can be found below.

Influenza: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/flu>

COVID: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19>

Gastroenteritis: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/gastroenteritis>



The Australian National Immunisation Program recommends and encourages an annual influenza vaccination for all Australians aged 6 months and over, particularly those who are at higher risk of complications from influenza such as older adults.

Influenza vaccines are given each year to protect against the most common strains of the virus. The strains can change from year to year so the vaccines may be updated from one season to the next, so it's important to get vaccinated every year.



Your General Practitioner can advise you on having your COVID booster, if you are due, along with the flu vaccine. You can learn more about the vaccine from the Government fact sheet here:

<https://bit.ly/3ZipOsT>

### **Visiting as a Partner in Care during an outbreak**

Visitor restrictions during an outbreak are difficult for everyone, and St Basil's Homes recognises and values the importance of loved ones connecting. St Basil's Homes is supporting this need with the Government's Partnership in Care program so that relationships and companionship can continue, even during periods of an infectious outbreak.

In order to become a partner in care nominated representatives, family or friends need to do some basic training on infection, prevention and control.

Residents and representatives are encouraged to discuss this and if you both agree to be partners in care then let the Care Manager know. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has designed the following resources that we ask you to complete.

- [Partner in care fact sheet](#) – this explains partnerships in care.
- [Visiting essentials for \(PiC\)](#) – a digital module on infection prevention and control (IPC) for partners in care.
- [Visiting essentials during an infectious outbreak](#) – a digital module focusing on keeping safe during an outbreak.
- [Partner information package](#) – assists partners to build knowledge and skills in IPC practices.

We are happy to speak to you and support you to become a Partner in Care. Please reach out to the home by telephone or email.



### **Precautions, expectations and requirements when visiting St Basil's Homes**

We continue to be guided by NSW Health and the local Public Health Units on best-practices based on situations and residents at each home. We ask that you take all precautions necessary including screening yourself before entering any St Basil's homes or facilities.

We ask that you do not visit a St Basil's Homes if you have:

- [Tested positive for COVID-19](#). Visitors should not enter an aged care home for at least 7 days after their positive test, unless authorised by the General Manager or Care Manager for compassionate reasons.
- Been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. They should follow the advice in the [Advice for people exposed to COVID-19 fact sheet](#) and should avoid visiting an aged care home for at least 7 days.
- Any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or are waiting for a COVID-19 test result.



On the day of your visit:

- Please ensure you have a **negative RAT test** conducted on the same day prior to the visit, you also have the option of doing a RAT test onsite prior to entering the facility.
- Screen yourself prior to entry for any COVID-19 symptoms, influenza and Gastro symptoms, check your temperature and fill in our declaration form prior to entry, and adhere to hand hygiene practices.
- Be vigilant in following the instructions provided by staff while you visit, including the use of PPE such as a mask, face shield and/or gown, and consider having your visit in a well-ventilated area like outdoors.

If you are unsure of your symptoms, before visiting the home please use this online tool to check your symptoms: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker>

If you cannot visit in person, we will gladly keep you connected with your loved one through video or telephone calls - our staff are here to support you with this at any time. Simply call us on 1300 367 551 and choose the location of your loved one or email us at [admin@stbasils.org.au](mailto:admin@stbasils.org.au)

Your cooperation in keeping residents and staff as safe as possible using the above precautions would be greatly appreciated. If you have any queries feel free to call us on 1300 367 551 or email us at [admin@stbasils.org.au](mailto:admin@stbasils.org.au)

Kind regards,

**Diana Gutkovich**

Director of Care, Quality and Risk

