

Thursday, 16 December 2021

Dear Family Members and Carers,

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation as we work to keep residents, staff and family members safe from COVID-19. We are grateful restrictions have eased, and you can see your loved ones regularly now.

As more family and friends visit loved ones, particularly over the Christmas and New Year period, we would like to remind you to consider the health and wellbeing of your loved one, other residents and the staff before coming to visit.

**Please do not attempt to visit the home if you or your family members have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 72 hours.** Symptoms include:

- Fever of 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell

It is also important that you do not visit the home if you receive a case alert from Service NSW notifying you that you have been a close contact. You can visit your loved one again once you have a negative COVID-19 result.

If you have a booking to visit your loved one and need to cancel due to COVID-19 symptoms, we will reschedule your visit to a time when you have been symptom-free for at least 72 hours and feel completely well again.

I appreciate your commitment to keeping your loved one, other residents and our staff safe by staying home if you feel unwell.

### **Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT)**

Due to fluctuating COVID-19 cases in the community, we may need to implement rapid antigen testing (RAT) in homes for staff, visitors and residents. This requirement can change quickly, and the home will notify you if you need to RAT test when you arrive for a visit. BaptistCare will provide the RAT test in this instance.

### **Christmas Celebrations**

We are pleased we can offer Christmas celebrations in our homes over the Christmas period.

We are following the *Guidance for residential aged care facilities* provided by NSW Health to ensure a safe festive season, which can be found here

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Documents/racf-festive-season.pdf>

- Each home will celebrate Christmas in a COVIDSafe way
- All homes are offering the option of a celebratory meal for family and friends to attend with residents
- Limits to guest numbers for the celebratory meal apply, and your local home will let you know the details

If you are taking a loved one out of the home over Christmas, please let your local home know the details so that we can be prepared.

Visiting arrangements can change at very short notice. We will let you know if there are changes to restrictions over the coming holiday period.

### Visitor Guidelines

We know restrictions continue to ease in the general community as of 15 December 2021 in NSW. However, the NSW Public Health Order for residential aged care homes will not change on this date. This means:

- Visitors from overseas or those who have recently travelled cannot enter the home for 14 days
- Only fully vaccinated adults are allowed to visit a resident in an aged care home
- Only two fully vaccinated adults and two children under 12 are allowed to visit a resident each day
- Appropriate social distancing is still required within aged care homes
- Wearing facemasks is still required in aged care homes
- NSW Health recommends anyone under 12 have a RAT test before visiting the home
- For more information about NSW Health recommendations, please visit <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/racf-latest-advice.aspx>
- For more information about ACT Health recommendations, please visit <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/current-restrictions>

We realise you will be disappointed that more friends and relatives cannot visit your loved one over Christmas. We are hopeful we can open each home to more visitors in the coming weeks. However, case numbers are increasing due to the new COVID-19 variant, and we are taking a cautious approach on visitor numbers until the situation in the general community becomes clearer.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable Christmas with your family and friends. We look forward to welcoming you to our homes over the Christmas period.

Kind regards,



Allan Waters  
General Manager, Residential Services and Retirement Living