



**Vacenti Response to Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Update no 2**  
**Information Known as of 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020**

You are all no-doubt aware of the spread of the COVID-19 virus (formally known as Coronavirus) globally. I think we are all becoming a little more apprehensive about this spread and its treatment options. Australia already has a small number of cases of COVID-19 but the source of the infections are known and the potential spread is contained. As of 2 March 2020, Queensland has had 9 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Of the confirmed cases in Queensland:

- 5 cases were from a tour group originating in Wuhan, China
- 3 cases were from the Diamond Princess cruise ship group evacuated from Darwin for treatment in Queensland Hospitals
- 1 case was from a woman who returned from Iran.

Vacenti sent out Department of Health information to all families on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 providing information on the COVID-19 virus. We thought it prudent to provide an update in case there was a growing concern of potential impact on residents and families.

All aged care providers are given regular updates by the Department of Health and the Chief Medical Officer which include recommended precautions. Given all cases, to date, are “known source” (for example the cruise ship in Japan) , we have had no directions by the Department to take any further action other than heightened diligence in our current infection control programs.

Families were advised:

- If you have left, or transited through, mainland China in the last 14 days you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the date of leaving mainland China.
- If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the date of last contact with the confirmed case.

Obviously this may change should Australia, or Brisbane itself, uncover a case of COVID-19 where the source is not known. We have plans in place should that occur. We have been in contact with our critical suppliers to commence discussions on stock levels available to us should the Department of Health change its recommendations. This includes medications, food supplies, clinical supplies, etc. An internal COVID-19 committee has been established and will be monitoring the situation daily.

We re-enforce our request for family not to visit any of our sites if they are suffering cold/flu type symptoms. According to the Department of Health, symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

We re-enforce our request for family not to visit any of our sites if they, or someone they have been in contact with, has visited any area where the COVID-19 virus has spread, for a period of 14 days after that visit/contact.

We also seek your assistance in preventing possible spread through:

- washing hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet;
- avoiding contact with others by keeping family members, including children, at home if they are unwell;
- cough and sneeze into their elbow, and
- Considering flu vaccination this year.

Vacenti can assure you that the health and safety of residents, families, visitors and staff is of utmost importance. If you have any concerns about the COVID-19 virus, or any other matter, please contact your Facility Manager.



## Information for residents of residential aged care services, their family members and visitors

There is an outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in mainland China.

If residents, their family members or visitors have travelled from mainland China or think they may have been a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus, special restrictions apply. They must isolate themselves in their home or accommodation, which means not attending public places, in particular work, school, university or public gatherings.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with the 'What you need to know' and 'Isolation guidance' information sheets at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### Who needs to isolate?

To help limit the spread of coronavirus, you must isolate yourself in the following circumstances:

- If you have left, or transited through, mainland China in the last 14 days you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the date of leaving mainland China.
- If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the date of last contact with the confirmed case.

### Residential aged care services

Residents of aged care facilities are advised that if any family members or visitors meet the restrictions, residents will not be able to have these visitors. These visitors will need to be isolated in their own homes.

Residential aged care facilities have been advised to have appropriate precautions in place to ensure residents continue to remain safe from coronavirus. These precautions include monitoring for coronavirus, assessment, testing and having space and resources prepared in the unlikely event a resident needs to be isolated.

At this stage, there is a low likelihood that residential aged care facilities will be affected by coronavirus and these measures are purely precautionary.

### What does it mean to be isolated?

If you are a resident and need to be isolated, you will be placed in a single room away from other residents and will not be allowed to see visitors. Health care and residential care workers will continue to provide support and care while you are isolated. If you need to leave your room, such as to seek medical care, you will be required to wear a surgical mask, which will be provided by health care workers. There is no need for any healthy resident to wear a mask.

If you are a family member or visitor who needs to be isolated, refer to advice in the 'Isolation guidance' information sheet at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

## How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact).

## More information

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness—not coronavirus.

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of each state or territory public health agency is available at [www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts](http://www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts)

If you have concerns about your health, speak to a doctor.

Yours sincerely

**Brian Sharp**

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