



### **Vacenti Update on Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Update no 3** **Information Known as of 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2020**

You are all no-doubt aware of the spread of the COVID-19 virus (formally known as Coronavirus) globally. Vacenti will continue to provide updated information to our residents and families:

- to advise the current position as we know it, and
- to advise any actions taken and/or decisions made.

Australia still has a relatively small number of cases of COVID-19 and, as you are aware, our Health authorities are working very hard to contain the spread as much as possible. As of 5<sup>th</sup> March, Queensland has had 13 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Details of those cases can be found on the [Qld Health website](#). No Queensland residential care services have reported a case to date. There has been one aged care site in New South Wales.

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. The Department updated this information on the 4<sup>th</sup> March and that revised "[Information for Residents of Residential Care Services](#)" is below.

All aged care providers are given regular updates by the Department of Health and the Chief Medical Officer which include recommended precautions. We have had no directions by the Department to take any further action with respect to residents, families and visitors other than heightened diligence in our current infection control programs.

Families are advised:

*"If residents, their family members or visitors have travelled from mainland China or Iran, 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."*

The Department of Health has placed home isolation restrictions on any staff returning from Iran, China, Japan and South Korea. Naturally, we are adhering to that advice. We have put additional monitoring requirements on our staff over-and-above the Department's recommendations.

**Vacenti is concerned, but not alarmed.** Every indication from the Queensland Chief Medical Officer is that number of cases will increase in spite of everyone's best efforts to contain it. There is always a chance we may see a case on one of our sites. In past years our sites have had cases of different types of gastrointestinal or influenza type of outbreaks which we have managed very well and contained.

Vacenti has commenced an internal COVID-19 committee who are meeting very regularly to discuss all aspects of the current situation, our preparedness for a possible coronavirus case, our actions if a case is confirmed and our communications plan. We have already commenced additional infection control education for our staff and additional cleaning and sanitising requirements.

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.

Vacenti will take a very precautionary approach to any resident, family or visitor showing any signs of a chest infection, cold or flu. This will include isolation of residents and use of protective precautions until test results are returned. We hope you can appreciate this precautionary approach. If you visit a site and see staff wearing PPE, or

a resident in isolation, this does not necessarily mean we have a case of coronavirus. As the Department of Health have stated:

*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.*

Vacenti has always been honest and open in our outbreak communications. We will tell you if we have a confirmed case of coronavirus.

Our priority is to prevent the virus from entering our sites. 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.

Please do not be offended if our staff point out hand sanitiser or hand washing stations.

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

If residents, their family members or visitors have travelled from mainland China or Iran, 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 or Iran in the last 14 days you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the date of leaving mainland China/Iran.
- 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.

### 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 (stay more than 1.5 meters from people).

### 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

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**Vacanti** 

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