

Infection Prevention & Control Updates: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Residents & Families

Requirements for visiting

<p>Is mask wearing still mandatory when visitors attend the home?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Monday 11th September masks will no longer be required when visiting onsite at Catholic Healthcare homes in NSW. If a resident or client develops respiratory symptoms, then employees and visitors will be asked to wear a mask. If there is an infectious outbreak within the home masks will be required. There may be times when masks are reinstated as directed by public health orders.
<p>Is RAT testing still required when visiting a home?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Monday 11th September Catholic Healthcare do not require visitors to RAT on entry to the care home. Visitors must not attend the home if they have respiratory symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore/scratchy throat, shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste). Viruses like influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19 are around. RAT testing will be reinstated during infectious outbreaks or high-risk exposures as directed by the CHL Manager for Infection Prevention and Control.

Recommended for Vaccination

<p>Is it mandatory for residents to have the 2023 influenza vaccination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, it is the residents' choice whether they have this or not, however we <i>strongly encourage</i> all residents to do so. Each Catholic Healthcare home supports residents by organising GP clinics or arranging PHU support to administer seasonal influenza vaccinations. It is not mandatory for visitors to have seasonal influenza vaccine to visit a Catholic Healthcare home, however we strongly encourage you to do so.
<p>Is it mandatory for residents to have COVID-19 vaccination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new residents admitted to our homes are to have the primary dose 1 and 2 of a TGA approved COVID vaccine. If a potential resident is not vaccinated, please discuss vaccination with your Residential Manager who can support a plan for the resident to be vaccinated. If a potential resident has dose 1 COVID vaccine, they can be admitted with a plan in place to have dose 2 onsite. Current residents who are not vaccinated are strongly encouraged to receive COVID vaccinations and regularly offered opportunities as they arise.
<p>Is it mandatory for residents to have the 2023 COVID-19 booster vaccination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, it is the residents' choice whether they have this or not, however we would strongly encourage them to do so. We offer the COVID booster to the resident when they are eligible.

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Other FAQs

How is Catholic Healthcare keeping residents safe?

- Catholic Healthcare continues to practice a robust entry protocol.
- This includes confirming on entry that you do not have respiratory symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore/scratchy throat, shortness of breath). No one can enter who has symptoms.
- There are some exceptions such as end of life situations. For this scenario we support visitors and implement a risk plan which will include wearing a mask.
- The below questions are answered using the SINE digital check in at each home:
 - I do not have COVID-19.
 - I do not live in the same household as a person who has COVID-19.
 - I have not been recently exposed to a positive COVID-19 person.
- For further information please refer to [Advice for people exposed to COVID-19](#).
- Visits continue and we ask that you support physical distance away from other residents and family groups.
- Visitors are encouraged to sanitize their hands on entry and exit to the home.
- Residents are screened regularly to check they do not have symptoms or feel unwell.
- Visitors may wear a surgical mask when they visit if they prefer.
- Residents are offered a surgical mask to wear when on social leave to high-risk locations such as densely populated venues where social distancing cannot be guaranteed e.g., concerts, cinema.
- Catholic Healthcare work alongside our families as **partners in care** to keep our residents safe.
- Additional guidance on visiting a RACF is available in the [Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes during COVID-19](#).
- For the best protection against severe COVID-19 and influenza, it is **strongly encouraged** that residents are up to date with all recommended vaccines. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has issued its [latest advice](#) on **1 September 2023**, recommending all adults aged 75 years and older receive an additional 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose if 6 months have passed since their last dose.