

October 28 • 2020

Residents Aged Care Newsletter



BEECHWORTH
HEALTH SERVICE

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Message from Macy

This weekly update will provide you with information on how BHS is implementing our pandemic plan and also provide information on what has been happening in the residences.

We continue caring for your loved ones in The Acacias and Stringybark Lodge, in the midst of this unprecedented event. Our lines for communication will remain open for any queries and we will do our best to give a response in the quickest time possible.

Please let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter by email instead of a paper copy.

If any family or friends would like to receive the newsletter please let us know by calling 0357 280 200 or email info@beechworthhealth.org.au

Kind regards,
Macy Veneracion

This newsletter is available on our website
www.beechworthhealthservice.com.au

Fitness to attend BHS

Please advise staff if you have you travelled to a high-risk location or place where there is a known outbreak of COVID- 19 in the past 14 days so that we can complete a risk assessment.

For current outbreaks/high risk locations COVID-19 visit:
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/case-locations-and-outbreaks>

Unless to receive urgent care, no person must enter BHS if you:

- Have a temperature at or above 37.5 degrees
- Are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, or fever
- Are waiting for COVID test results
- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have not yet been given clearance from self-isolation
- Arrived in Australia within the last 14 days
- Have had known contact in the past 14 days with a person who was a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Have been directed to self-isolate or self-quarantine by and authorised officer

Facemasks

- All Victorians must wear a face covering when they leave home, no matter where they live, unless they have lawful reason for not doing so
- There are a number of lawful exceptions for not wearing a face covering: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-coverings-covid-19#exceptions-for-not-wearing-a-face-covering
- Visitors to Residential Aged Care must wear a mask provided by BHS
- Please dispose of facemasks thoughtfully into a general waste bin
- **We have a supply of disposable and re-usable masks for community members to access – simply ask at main reception.**

Asymptomatic testing

- **As per DHHS directive BHS, in partnership with Albury Wodonga Health, will make available asymptomatic testing for anybody who works in our aged care facilities as of Thursday 29/10. Testing will be available weekly on-site.**
- **While testing is not compulsory, we are strongly encouraging anybody who works in aged care to be tested monthly as a minimum.**

If your mental health is suffering because of the current pandemic, call HeadtoHelp

HeadtoHelp supports Victorians of all ages. It is an initiative aimed at helping people to take the first steps towards finding the mental health and wellbeing support that's best for you, particularly in the current pandemic climate
<https://headtohelp.org.au/>

- Now is the time to reach out, even if you've never felt like this or asked for help before.
- The sooner you talk about your mental health, the sooner you'll get the help and support you need, to help you move forward and feel stronger.
- A trained professional will take your call, give you advice, and if you need it, connect you to a free HeadtoHelp hub or help you find the support that suits your needs. Our nearest headtoHelp hub is located in Wodonga
- 1800 595 212 (free call) 8.30am – 5pm Monday – Friday

This is not a crisis service - if you need immediate help or are at risk to yourself or others, call 000.

If you need urgent support call:

LifeLine 13 11 14

MensLine 1300 789 978

Beyond Blue – Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service 1800 512 348

SuicideLine 1300 651 251

Visiting Residential Aged Care

There are no changes to BHS visiting guidelines, however we are currently reviewing visiting in line with updated guidelines from DHHS.

- To keep everyone safe we are working together with residents and their loved ones within current guidelines to find the right balance between protecting everyone from COVID-19 and providing vital social connections and support.
- We ask you not to 'visit' via windows due to risks associated with window access around the BHS site. Please only drop off essential items to residents.

STEP 1: BOOK A CARE & SUPPORT RELATED VISITING APPOINTMENT

- All visits must be booked at least one day in advance
- Call main reception on 5728 0200 during business hours (Mon to Fri 8:30am to 5pm)
- **You must advise staff if you have you travelled to a high-risk location or place where there is a known outbreak of COVID- 19 in the past 14 days so that we can complete a risk assessment.**
- **For current outbreaks/high risk locations COVID-19 visit:**
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/case-locations-and-outbreaks>

STEP 2: COMPLETE ENTRY SCREENING

- **Enter via Entrance 1: Main reception during business hours**
- After hours enter via Entrance 2: Acute Services
- Undertake screening & comply with infection control measures
- Provide evidence of current 2020 influenza vaccination (for aged care visitors)
- Sign visitor log

STEP 3: COVID-SAFE CARE & SUPPORT VISIT

- Visits are between 10am and 3pm unless there is an allowable exemption
- A resident may have one visit per day, unless there is an allowable exemption
- Duration of visit must not exceed one hour unless there is an allowable exemption
- Exemptions must be discussed and approved by the Acute Unit or Residential Aged Care manager or their delegate
- Wear facemask provided by BHS - available at entry points
- Sign in to the aged care unit using the visitor log in unit foyer
- Only visit the resident you have booked to visit & stay in the resident room only
- Children aged 16 years or less must be permitted only by exception
- Maintain physical distancing -i.e. separation of 1.5 metres
- Practice cough etiquette / respiratory hygiene
- Use provided hand sanitiser on entering and leaving resident room and the facility
- No large group visits or gatherings– this includes outdoor visits on our site

The COVID-19 environment can change – we recommend you call ahead of your visit to check current guidelines.

Covid-19 testing

To keep our community safe, you should get tested for COVID-19 if you have these symptoms, however mild:

- Fever
- Chills or sweats
- Cough / sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste

Where to get tested?

- You should seek testing from your General Practitioner (GP)
- Anyone seeking testing needs to have an appointment - call ahead and follow the instructions about presenting for a test
- If you are unable to get tested at your GP, find your nearest testing site by calling the 24-hour coronavirus hotline [1800 675 398](tel:1800675398) or visit: vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS
- Beechworth Surgery offers limited testing for people with symptoms who are:
 - Residents of Beechworth and surrounds and /or
 - Patients of Beechworth Surgery
 - Tests are by appointment only - call 03 5728 1566

What does a test cost?

- A test is free for anyone with symptoms that meets the criteria for COVID-19 testing
- Bring at least one form of identification e.g. Medicare card, driver's licence

Why is it important to get tested for COVID-19?

- Testing helps find and isolate cases quickly and allows contact tracing to commence
- Collecting as much information about COVID-19 as we can helps reduce the spread of the virus

What does a test involve?

- The test involves a swab from the back of your throat and nose
- The test takes around a minute

What happens after the test?

- You must return home immediately after the test and remain in self-isolation until you receive a negative test result and until your symptoms have resolved
- If you need assistance while you are in self-isolation please call the Indigo Shire Council Pandemic Coordination team on 1300 365 003 who can connect you to local services

BHS website

Visit the BHS website to keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 information
<https://beechworthhealthservice.com.au/>

The Residential aged care section has range of information relating to residential aged care including:

- The latest Residential aged care newsletter
- Activities calendars

Help to get online

Quercus Beechworth are offering a free program to get yourself connected online.

Quercus Beechworth also has 4 ipads and 1 samsung tablet for loan to those over 50. The devices come with a prepaid Sim, and we provide instructions on how to log in and get onto BeConnected.

BeOnline@Home

- Gain confidence and skills
- Learn in the comfort of your home
- Learn online safety
- Learn how to chat to family and friends
- Learn how to buy safely online
- and that's just the beginning!

For over 50's FREE

We come to you!

for more info, call Jo on 5728 2386 or
e: reception@quercusbeechworth.com.au

QUERCUS BEECHWORTH

Please sign in once inside the aged care unit

A friendly reminder for visitors to:

- Sign in at the Acute unit entry after your temperature check and screening questions
- Sign in again once you are inside the units Stringybark Lodge and Acacias - visitor sign in books are located in the foyer areas.



Volunteer programs

- Volunteer programs at BHS are currently postponed
- The Volunteer Coordinator maintains regular contact with volunteers and volunteers receive a weekly update from BHS.
- The exception is Indigo Calling telephone visiting program which remains available for community members and aged care residents who would like a chat to reduce isolation.

Telehealth

Telehealth is now available at BHS as a secure and easy way to access health care using digital technology.

To learn more: www.beechworthhealthservice.com.au/telehealth.html

How to stay connected with loved ones

PHONE

- Aged care residents can have direct landline installed to their room – please discuss with the Residential Aged Care Manager.
- Residents can purchase their own mobile phone or tablet with a phone plan.
- For both Stringybark Lodge and The Acacias, between 8am – 1pm, Monday to Friday, call 03 5728 0337
Outside of these hours:
Stringybark Lodge 03 5728 0371
The Acacias 03 5728 0365

EMAIL

Stringybark Lodge: Stringybark@beechworthhealth.org.au
The Acacias: Acacias@beechworthhealth.org.au

SKYPE

Contact an Activity Officer to book a time to Skype.
For Stringybark: Skype name is: **Health Beechworth**
For The Acacias: Skype name is **Beechworth Health**



FACEBOOK & SOCIAL MEDIA

- Follow the BHS Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/BeechworthHealthService
- A family member can set up a social media e.g Facebook, Instagram account for a resident and staff can assist the resident to sign into the account and view photos and messages.

Information

You can work with us to minimise transmissions by keeping up to date with information provided by:

- Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au
- The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

COVID -19 update

ZONES

- Following guidance from the DHHS and further to our COVID-safe approach, BHS is minimising movement of staff across our site by introducing ZONES
- A ZONE is an area of the health service that is restricted to only the staff who are essential to provide services to the ZONE
- Minimising movement via zoning across the site reduces risk of COVID-19 transmission, this protects everybody
- Current visiting guidelines remain in place, visitors must remain in the patient / resident room and only visit the person they have booked to see

Additional infection control measures

- All people entering the BHS facility must answer screening questions and have a temperature check.

COVID-19 preparedness

- We continue to act on all advice from the Vic Dept Health and Human Services.
- We continue to work with local and referral service partners in our pandemic planning response to ensure local level coordination of service response and service delivery.
- An Information Hotline is established at option number 8 on the BHS message greeting via BHS reception on 03 5728 0200. The Information Hotline is ONLY enabled in outbreak or emergency scenarios where an information hotline for families and loved ones to contact BHS is deemed useful and assistive.
- An outbreak management team is established to coordinate action in the event of an outbreak at BHS

Allied health

- Allied health appointments continue with some modification.
- Physiotherapy gym groups remain postponed

Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- There have been reports in the media that some Victorian healthcare workers report being unable to access adequate PPE. We wish to reassure you that BHS has adequate supplies of PPE for staff and staff are well versed on its proper use.

Community supports

- Meals and financial support are available via Quercus. Call 0408 845 966 or visit www.quercusbeechworth.com.au
- Indigo Shire has a Pandemic Coordination Team to assist with community issues. Contact on 1300 365 003.
- Quercus Beechworth are providing a free program for people aged over 50 to assist people to get connected online. Flyers about the BeOnline@home program are available at the entry to Acute and main reception or visit: quercusbeechworth.com.au
- Upper Murray Family Care provide programs to support people experiencing financial disadvantage and vulnerabilities – visit: www.umfc.com.au

Dementia support

- Changing Minds Carer Support group meetings are currently being held outdoors to find out more please contact BHS on 03 57 280 200.
- If you need support please call the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.
- Locally, Changing Minds Support Group members are also available to talk with by phone. To access this please contact BHS on 03 57 280 200.

Staying Connected Support Packs & free facemasks

- Indigo Shire has recently received funding under the Victorian Government's Community Activation and Social Isolation Initiative. As part of this program, Council has developed Staying Connected Support Packs to help residents access important information and maintain social connections. The support packs include information about local services, social support and self care.
- Council has also received reusable face masks from the Victorian State Government to be distributed to vulnerable residents who may be less likely to have access to a face covering.
- If you or someone you know would like to receive a support pack or have had trouble accessing a mask, please call the Pandemic Coordination Team on 1300 365 003 who will arrange to get them to you.