

# Old age homes



#UnityInAction

## Risk increases with age:

The risk of COVID-19 infection increases as people get older. Many South African old age homes have introduced strict controls that often see older people being restricted to the facility.

## Precautions for people living in homes:

For people who find themselves confined to homes, several steps can be followed to stay healthy. These are:



- Sticking to daily routines for activities, sleeping and meals.



- Staying connected and keeping in contact with family and friends through the phone, video calls or messaging, e-mails or writing letters.



- Staying physically active by exercising for at least 30 minutes a day and avoiding long periods of inactivity.



- Setting up daily routines.



- Drinking water and eating healthy well-balanced meals. This ensures that you stay hydrated, strengthen your immune system and lower the risk of chronic illnesses and infectious diseases.



- Avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol because:
  - Smokers are more likely to contract COVID-19 because smoking can affect lung capacity and increase the possibility of transmission of the virus from hand to mouth.
  - Drinking alcohol disturbs sleep, increases the risk of falls and can interact with prescription medicines.



- Engaging in hobbies and activities that you enjoy or learn something new.

While keeping healthy, the possibility of contracting the virus can be reduced by:



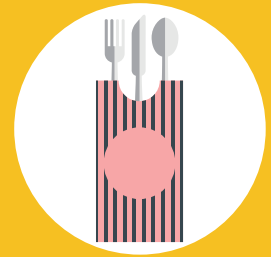
- Wearing a mask when leaving your room and keep it covering your mouth and nose while in communal areas such as lounges and dining rooms.



- Ensuring that you constantly wash or sanitise your hands during the day, especially before and after touching surfaces in high traffic areas.



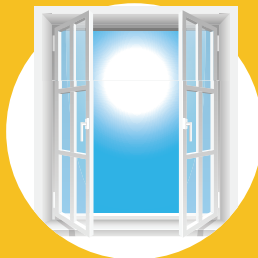
- Avoiding books, magazines and newspapers that may be provided for use by residents.



- Using cutlery that is individually wrapped in dining areas.



- Avoiding linen napkins and using paper serviettes instead. If necessary, obtain cutlery and take it with you when going for meals.



- Keeping numbers as low as possible in meeting rooms and communal areas and ensuring that the room is well ventilated.



- Maintaining social distancing at all times.

## Being a responsible visitor:

In many cases, the operators and managers of old age homes have strict controls in place. Before visiting, it is always best to phone ahead and find out what rules apply. If visitors are allowed, then:



- Meet outdoors if possible so that social distancing can be maintained.



- Keep visiting groups small. Ideally, visits by a single person are best. If more people wish to visit, then:
  - Try and limit the number of visitors.
  - If possible, try and ensure that they are from a single household.
  - Wear masks and observe social distancing.
  - Sanitise hands when entering the facility and after touching surfaces.



- Take food, refreshments and utensils along. Bag everything after use and either dispose of it on-site or immediately after getting home.



- Avoid touching common surfaces whenever possible. Even during an outdoor gathering, you may go indoors. If you do, make sure that you take a hand sanitiser along and use it.



- Keep the visit short. Spending longer periods together increases risk of transmission.

## References

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