



Guidelines for Meals on Wheels services working with Coronavirus.

Meals on Wheels Victoria provides the following guidelines for member services which can be added to the Meals on Wheels Policy Manual and used as a guide for working with Coronavirus.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner stated the following in a recent newsletter

“While Australia’s containment strategy has to date proven to be very effective, it is generally expected that over time the number of people with the viral infection in Australia will increase. Given that the virus seems to have more serious consequences for older people with chronic illness, all aged care providers should be on high alert and taking steps now to reduce the risks to their consumers and staff”¹.

The Chief Medical Officer has recently suggested considering the following factors in relation to emergency planning:

- *“first steps if infection is suspected or identified (e.g. seeking medical assessment, diagnosis and contact with local public health officials, if needed);*
- *arrangements to ensure adequate care of the infected individual (e.g. staffing, isolation/quarantine within the facility, medical care, further liaison with public health officials);*
- *protection measures for other residents, visitors and staff*
- *notification advice to families, carers and relevant authorities”.*

In relation to Meals on Wheels we suggest the following preparation/planning in order to prepare, reduce risks and respond the Coronavirus.

Infection Control/Risk Minimisation

- Check your Work Health and Safety, Food Handling and/or Hygiene Policy and ensure these policies are being followed
- Ask volunteers and staff to notify you if they are sick and remain at home
- Ask volunteers and staff to notify you if they may be at risk of Coronavirus (visited countries that are identified at risk
- We recommend sending a letter to all volunteers and clients to ask them to notify the service if they are at risk of Coronavirus (ie have travelled to at risk countries or been in contact with someone with the virus), and/or have been unwell [Information to provide to clients, volunteers & staff here](#)
- Display the following poster in your facility, put in a newsletter or memo to clients, volunteers and staff [Prevention poster](#)
- Ensure handwashing procedures and food handling processes are followed adequately by all staff and volunteers

¹ <https://agedcarequality.govcms.gov.au/news/newsletter/aged-care-quality-bulletin-14-february-2020#commissioner%20message>

- Provide adequate handwashing detergents & paper towels (see attached handwashing poster for putting near sinks/bathrooms)
- Provide alcohol wipes/sanitiser for volunteers delivering meals and ensure they wash hands after each visit
- Display the following sign in your facility [Know the signs](#)
- If/when in home isolation follow [home isolation information guidance](#)
- Keep up to date with current information by following the World Health Organisation's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WHO/> or website [WHO Website](#)

If you need to deliver meals to someone who is in home isolation

- In the first instance, speak with your local Health Department/hospital and determine risks/strategies for delivering meals to the isolated client (each case will be different and so you need to determine risks, strategies/procedures for each case)
- Do not send volunteers to deliver meals who may be at a higher risk of contracting the virus (ie older people, those who are unwell or may have compromised health)
- Determine the most appropriate volunteer or staff to deliver the meal to the isolated client and ensure they are comfortable with delivering the meal
- Where possible, ensure the meals are delivered to an agreed safe place (for example, outside the house on the verandah) and contact is minimised with the isolated client
- It might be possible for someone who is already attending the isolated client to take the meals (for example, another health worker or carer)
- Consider a delivery of a number of meals (frozen) to limit the number of visits to the same home
- Ensure the isolated client & the deliver has protective equipment in place where contact is required (correct masks etc)
- Make contact with the client via phone as much as possible (to ensure they received the meal when delivered, ask if they need any other help etc) and that they are safe at home

Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources#posters>

World Health Organisation <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>