

Dementia during COVID-19: Tips if you have Dementia or you are a care-partner

Living with dementia, or supporting a person with dementia, during this challenging time may be difficult. Being confined to home more than we might be used to can cause confusion, frustration and put additional stress on everyone. This means it is important for us to look after ourselves and others living the dementia experience.

Here are some helpful tips to assist in making things a little easier.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Keep explanations simple, using words like the 'flu rather than COVID-19. Write down the explanation and leave it where everyone can see and read it.

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LIMIT NEWS TIME

Limit time and exposure to the news.



KEEP A ROUTINE

Try to keep a routine, keep orientated to the day, date and time.



ACCEPT OFFERS OF HELP

Ask family or neighbours for help if you need groceries or medication picked up. Ensure you only get help from someone you know.



CONTINUE ACCESSING SUPPORT NETWORKS

Stay connected. Dementia Canterbury is developing online support groups, activity and education programmes. Call (03) 379 2590 for more information.

PREVENTION & GOOD HYGIENE

Everyone needs to wash their hands. Do it together and sing Happy Birthday twice. Put a picture in the bathroom showing hands with lots of soapy water. Use hand sanitiser if easier as an alternative.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

Use an object in the home to show the two-metre distance, like the length of a couch.

MANAGE WELLBEING

Reach out for support if you're feeling worried, stressed or overwhelmed. The Dementia Canterbury team is here for you. Phone 0800 444 776 or (03) 379 2590.



BACK UP PLAN

Identify a person who can step in to help if someone becomes unwell.



STAY ACTIVE

Try to get outside for fresh air and daylight. If you're able to go for a walk get some exercise around your own house or neighbourhood. Maintain social distancing of two metres.



If you think someone in your household is developing signs of COVID-19 phone your GP or contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

TIPS FOR STAYING WELL

- Connect with others – phone, text, email, Facebook, Skype, games online
- Keep physically active – walk in your neighbourhood, dance to your favourite music
- Stay mentally fit – board games, crosswords and word games, quizzes, puzzles, online games
- Put good things into your body – drink plenty of water, watch the snacks
- Spend time with nature – bring nature inside with plants and photos, listen to the birdsong, enjoy the sun
- Stick to your usual routine -keep your day to its usual pattern
- Take time to relax – create something, make a favourite meal, have a cuppa over the phone.

BE ALERT TO BECOMING UNWELL

DELIRIUM can be triggered by becoming unwell and/or stress. Be aware of the signs of delirium, usually indicated by a sudden escalation of dementia symptoms:

- Trouble paying attention
- Being restless and upset
- Slurring speech
- Not making any sense
- Seeing and hearing imaginary things
- Mixing up day and night
- Drifting between sleep and wakefulness; more restless or sleepy
- Confusion
- Unusual levels of agitation.

If you have any concerns, contact your GP.

For more information about delirium visit [edu.cdhb.health.nz/Patients-Visitors/patient-information-pamphlets/Documents/Preventing-Delirium-while-in-hospital-236937.pdf](https://www.educdhb.health.nz/Patients-Visitors/patient-information-pamphlets/Documents/Preventing-Delirium-while-in-hospital-236937.pdf)

For advice or support from Dementia Canterbury please contact us:

PHONE: 0800 444 776 or 03 379 2590

EMAIL: admin@dementiacanterbury.org.nz

WEBSITE: [dementiacanterbury.org.nz](https://www.dementiacanterbury.org.nz)

The New Zealand Government's website for information on COVID-19 is [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)

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