

NORTHERN HEALTH HOME CARE PACKAGES

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020



Hello everyone and welcome to our June 2020 Newsletter.

As I write this newsletter, I cannot underestimate how fortunate we are to live in Australia and in a society that managed so well during the pandemic. The low numbers of cases is a direct result of the community heeding the warnings and following the recommendations and restrictions. However we are not through this pandemic as yet and we must continue to follow any restrictions, but above all;

- If you are feeling unwell stay home and contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 or your GP who may be able to provide further advice.
- Practise good hand hygiene: this means either washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser for 20 seconds.
- Where possible, staying 1.5metres away from others.
- Stay home and avoid contact with others if unwell.
- Download the COVIDsafe app if you have a smart phone.



The risk of serious illness from COVID-19 increases with age, particularly those with serious health conditions or weakened immune systems.

At this stage the government is still suggesting older Australians stay at home unless it is for essential purposes like food shopping, medical appointments and exercise.

I will also take this opportunity to remind you of information recently sent to you with your statements regarding "Its ok to have home care". Your workers coming into your home have been taking all the necessary measures and following the best medical advice to ensure you remain safe.

If you would like to recommence a service that you had put on hold, speak to your Case Manager.

Julie Williams, Program Manager.

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Home Care Packages
1231 Plenty Road, Bundoora 3083
Telephone: 9495 3219
After Hours: 1300 881 078
www.nh.org.au

HOME CARE PACKAGES NEWSLETTER

New Home Care Packages Program Operational Manual for consumers.

In March this year the Commonwealth Department of Health released Operational Manuals for the Home Care Packages Program for both providers and consumers.

The manuals provide us with much clearer guidelines around what a Home Care Package can and can't fund and how we will make our decisions. While the funding is attached to individual consumers, the funding belongs to the Commonwealth and as a provider we are accountable for how the funds are spent.

There are care and services that you must not use Home care Package funds for:

- items that would normally be purchased out of general income;
- buying food including groceries and take-away meals, except as part of enteral feeding requirements;
- payment for permanent accommodation, including assistance with home purchase, mortgage payments or rent;
- payment of home care fees owing to your chosen provider;
- payment of fees or charges for other types of care funded, or partly funded, by the Australian Government;
- home modifications or assets that are not related to your care needs;
- travel and accommodation for holidays;
- cost of entertainment activities, such as club memberships and tickets to sporting events;
- gambling activities; and
- payment for services and items covered by the Medicare Benefits Schedule (for example, visits to your GP) or the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (for example, most medication you need a script for).

The examples below show some of the types of items that cannot be included in your Home Care Package:

Excluded item	Example
Use of the package funds as a source of general income for the care recipient	Household bills, the purchase of a car or petrol, funeral cover
Payment for permanent accommodation, including assistance with home purchase, mortgage payments or rent	Rates, home and contents insurance
Payment of home care fees	Basic daily fee, income-tested care fee and additional fees
Payment of fees or charges for other types of care funded or jointly funded by the Australian Government	Services that can be covered under the public health system
Home modifications or capital items that are not related to the care recipient's care needs	House renovations that exceed what is necessary for safety, independence, wellness and reablement.

You can find the Manual for consumers on the My Aged Care website at :

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/operational-manual-for-home-care-package-consumers.pdf>

HOME CARE PACKAGES NEWSLETTER

OUR RECENT CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS:

Thankyou to everyone who completed and returned our annual Consumer surveys. This time we sent out two different surveys and you would have received one or the other.

We have completed an evaluation and are happy to share the results with you.

- An overall very high level of satisfaction (90.4%) on our shorter survey.
- An average of 97% consumers scored us a “Excellent” or “Good” in the areas of Consumer Experience in the longer survey.
- 96% said they would recommend our program to someone else.

The reason for doing these surveys is discovering where we can improve our service. The areas you identified where we could improve include:

- Your understanding of the process of making a complaint or providing feedback (see page 4).
- Your participation in making decisions about what services you receive.
- Staff follow-up when you raise something with them.
- Helping you live the “best” life you can.
- Regular updating of your services.
- Getting the services you need.

You also provided some useful suggestions of how we could improve.

All feed back is valuable in assisting us to improve our program, and therefore improve the support we provide to you at home.

We will be seeking further feedback and suggestions from you, to determine how we can improve the areas you identified.

Please let your Case Manager know if you would like to be contacted to discuss further feedback, either by phone, or face-to-face.

Royal Commission into Aged Care

At the current time we note that the interim report from the Royal Commission identifies many opportunities for improvement of long term care, including a focus on better home care, in Australia.

Some key areas where care for older Australians can be improved include:

- more support for home care and informal carers
- more involvement from local authorities
- professionalism of the workforce
- more focus on rehab and maintaining function
- support for carers of people with dementia at home
- more use of smart home technology to support independent living.



The Commission has now recommenced after a pause during the pandemic and we will await the outcome and recommendations to determine how we can best improve our service to you.

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YOUR FEEDBACK:

We value all types of feedback including complaints and ways to improve what we do.

If you wish to provide any feedback you can:

- Talk to your Case Manager in the first instance if possible.
- If you have a complaint and it is not resolved contact the program Manager on 9495 3216 , or Northern Health's "Patient experience Team" on 9495 3229
- Email us on HomeCarePackages@nh.org.au , or write to us at NH HCP, 1231 Plenty Rd, Bundoora.
- You can also contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, which is a free service for people to raise their concerns about the quality of care or services being delivered to people receiving aged care services that are subsidised by the Australian Government. They can be contacted on 1800 951 822 or online at www.agedcarequality.gov.au or email info@agedcarequality.gov.au
- In addition, the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is a national program funded by the Commonwealth Government. The OPAN aims to promote the rights of people receiving Australian Government funded aged care services and can assist you to resolve problems or complaints through the provision of advocacy. It can be contacted on 1800 700 600. See: <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/quality-and-complaints/advocacy-services> or <http://www.opan.com.au/>.

Other Agencies that may be able to assist with an unresolved complaint include:

- The Victorian Ombudsman: 9613 6222 or 1800 806 314 (regional areas)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission: 1300 292 153
- Health Complaints Commissioner: 1300 582 113

You are entitled to make a complaint about any aspect of your care without fear of reprisal or it affecting your Package.

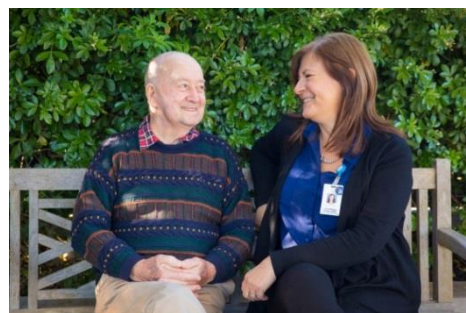
Influenza vaccine.

It is very important that you reduce your risk of getting other illnesses while COVID-19 remains in our community.

There is no vaccine for COVID-19.

However, it is important that you get the 2020 influenza vaccination which is now available from your GP or pharmacy.

Discuss with your doctor whether you should also have the pneumococcal vaccination against pneumonia, which is recommended for everyone over 65. You should also discuss having a shingles vaccination.



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Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission consumer survey.

You may recall we have mailed you information at various times around COVID-19 and how to stay safe. Your Case Manager has maintained contact via phone while not being able to visit you at home. They have provided you with education and assisted in making an individualised plan to help you manage and stay safe during the pandemic. This included strategies to deal with potential reductions in support services available.

Some of you cancelled non-essential supports and we would like to remind you that it's safe to recommence those supports and have provided you with an information sheet "It's ok to have home care" with your last monthly statement.

All our support staff and agencies are well prepared, educated and understand the implications of COVID-19 and the ways they can assist in keeping you safe.

Please speak to your Case Manager if you have services that you may have cancelled and would like to recommence.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission have made contact with our program twice to discuss the processes and actions we have been implementing to ensure our consumers stay safe, healthy and at home.

In addition during June and July, the Commission will be conducting a phone survey to hear directly from some home care consumers and their representatives about their experience of care and services. Commission officers will be telephoning around 5,000 home services consumers or their nominated representatives to invite them to take part in a voluntary survey.

The purpose of the survey is to understand outcomes for consumers with respect to the Aged Care Quality Standards, User Rights Principles and the effect of COVID-19 on consumers' care and services.

We encourage you to participate and voice your opinions if you are contacted.

Home fire safety

With the cooler weather comes the increased risk of house fires due to fireplaces, heaters and clothes dryers.

Please see the attached advice from The Metropolitan Fire Brigade and The Country Fire Authority.

If you require your smoke alarms checked (or a new one installed) please speak to your Case Manager, as this can be funded by your Home Care Package.



***Remember....If you're happy, tell your family and friends,.....
if you're not, tell us!!***

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Smoke alarms**
- ☐ Test and clean regularly.
 - ☐ At least one on each level.
 - ☐ One in every bedroom where someone sleeps with the door closed.

- Heaters**
- ☐ Install, maintain and operate according to manufacturer's instructions.
 - ☐ Keep 1 metre clear space around.
 - ☐ Turn off before going to bed or going out.

- Chimneys and flues**
- ☐ Clean yearly.

- Bedroom**
- ☐ Never smoke in bed.
 - ☐ Don't leave laptops on bed

- Electric blankets**
- ☐ Turn on no more than 30 minutes before bed.
 - ☐ Turn off before you get into bed.
 - ☐ Remove heavy items from bed when on.
 - ☐ Keep flat with controls at the side of the bed.
 - ☐ Regularly check for broken and worn wiring.

- Open fire place**
- ☐ Always use a fire screen in front of an open fire.
 - ☐ Put out fires before going to bed or going out.
 - ☐ Keep 1 metre clear space around

- Front door**
- ☐ Never deadlock doors when you're at home. If you must keep doors deadlocked, leave your keys in the lock.
 - ☐ Develop and practise your home fire escape plan – have two ways to escape each room and a designated safe meeting point outside your home, e.g. letterbox.

- Candles**
- ☐ Keep away from curtains.
 - ☐ Always use on non-combustible surfaces.

- Kitchen**
- ☐ Never leave cooking unattended.
 - ☐ Keep combustibles such as tea towels and curtains away from cooking and heat sources.
 - ☐ Keep pot handles turned in.
 - ☐ Keep grills, fans and cooking surfaces free of grease residue.

- Laundry**
- ☐ Clean the lint filter on your clothes dryer after each load.
 - ☐ Let the dryer complete its cooldown cycle before stopping.



Remember...

- > If your smoke alarms have removable batteries replace them every year.
- > Supervise children near heating equipment.
- > Turn off electrical appliances at the power point when not in use.
- > Keep electrical appliances and equipment in good working order.
- > Replace damaged equipment e.g. power cords.
- > Don't overload power boards.
- > Have and know how to use your fire blanket and extinguisher.



Fire safety for older people and people with disability

Older people and people with disability are at higher risk of being injured or not surviving a fire in their home. This usually occurs when disability or illness affects individual ability. Consider your situation. Will reduced hearing or vision mean you are slower to realise there is a fire? Will reduced mobility affect how you would safely escape a fire in your home? The information in this brochure, together with the home fire safety booklet has been designed to assist you to reduce your fire risk.

Early Warning

Fire fatalities involving older people and people with disability occur more often in homes where there are no working smoke alarms or poorly located smoke alarms. Early warning is vital for everyone. For people who live with disability it is crucial.

- **More than one smoke alarm**

More than one smoke alarm increases your early warning of a fire. Think about you and your home. Do you close doors to other parts of the house? In which part is the smoke alarm? If you are a smoker, do you have a smoke alarm in every room in which you smoke? Are you sometimes affected by medication or alcohol? Will a smoke alarm at the other end of the house wake or alert you?

This information sheet is to be distributed with the home fire safety booklet P448

- **Interconnected smoke alarms**

Smoke alarms can be interconnected by either wireless or simple wiring inside the roof. This means if a smoke alarm operates in one room of your home, all the connected smoke alarms in your home will be activated.

- **Smoke alarms for Deaf and hard of hearing**

Smoke alarms for the Deaf and hard of hearing work in conjunction with a strobe light and vibrating bed pad. You may be eligible for a government funded subsidy. If you are an Office of Housing tenant you should contact your local housing office for more information.

- **Smoke alarms linked to personal alarms**

A smoke alarm linked to personal alarms means if the smoke alarm is activated an alert will register at the personal alarm monitoring agency. These are not currently available via the government subsidised personal alarm program.

- **Testing**

It is vital that your smoke alarm is tested every month. Ask a family member, friend or neighbour to show you how to do this or seek their assistance to do this for you.

Responding to a fire

MFB recommends people with reduced ability, get out rather than attempt to fight a fire. A home escape plan will ensure you can safely escape in any emergency at any time of the day or night. Practise with a family carer, friend or neighbour so that they can assist you to identify any improvements. Make sure to:

- Locate your bedroom close to an exit,
- Keep your bedroom clear of clutter with good access around your bed and doorway,
- Store mobility aids in easy reach in the bedroom at night,

- Consider leaving all internal doors open at night for easy evacuation,
- If you have a personal alarm wear this in bed
- When you are home put keys in deadlock doors or security screens and never deadlock doors when you are home,
- Get down as low as you can to stay out of the smoke when evacuating,
- Get out and stay out,
- Call Triple Zero (000) or get a neighbour to do this for you.

If you cannot evacuate from your home without assistance you should:

- Have a telephone by your bed and pre-programmed with Triple Zero (000),
- Dial Triple Zero (000), wait for the operator and say FIRE, wait to be connected and tell them you have a fire and need evacuation assistance,
- Stay on the phone so you can tell them where to find you,
- Get down as low as you can and stay out of the smoke and heat,
- If you can, close the door to the room you are in and place towels, bedding and/or clothing under the door to reduce smoke coming in.

Other advice

- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street so emergency services can easily find your home,
- If you experience difficulty moving around your home on a day to day basis this may affect how quickly you can safely evacuate in an emergency. Consider a Physiotherapy and/or Occupational Therapy assessment for advice and information to maximise your independence and safety,
- If you are experiencing difficulty managing tasks such as cooking safely consider approaching your local council or a private provider for assistance and or delivered meals,
- Compulsive hoarding significantly increases the risk of having a fire and being unable to escape, keep pathways and door ways clear of accumulated items,
- If you use medical oxygen always follow the safety advice provided by your supplier. Failure to do so will increase the likelihood of a fire and increase the intensity.

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For further information about:

- Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy Services/ publicly funded personal alarms contact your local community health centre
- Smoke alarm subsidy for Deaf and hard of hearing contact Vicdeaf 9473 1111 TTY 9473 1199 info@vicdeaf.com.au
- Assisted living
Yooralla Independent Living Centre 9666 4500
yooralla@yooralla.com.au
- Services and equipment for people who are blind or have low vision Contact Vision Australia 1300 84 74 66,
info@visionaustralia.org.au
- Living with dementia
Alzheimer's Australia Vic 9815 7800 alz@alzvics.asn.au
- Fire safety presentations for seniors groups, smoke alarms or hoarding and fire risk contact MFB Community Resilience – (03) 9665 4464 – commres@mfb.vic.gov.au



Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) www.mfb.vic.gov.au