

# NORTHERN HEALTH HOME CARE PACKAGES

## NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2020



Hello everyone and welcome to our October 2020 Newsletter.

As Melbourne continues to live with the COVID pandemic, we remain busy ensuring you are well supported to stay safe and well at home.

We have plans for Case Managers to return to our office part-time and recommence visiting you at home. We would like to reassure you that home visits will be conducted according to all latest health, safety and infection control requirements including:

- Case Managers have daily temperature checks and complete a survey each morning declaring they are well and have not been exposed to COVID.
- Case Managers will call you prior to the visit to ask you some questions relating to COVID. It is very important that you answer honestly and notify your Case Manager if you are unwell or have been exposed to someone who has COVID. We can assist in testing you for COVID if required.
- Case Managers will be wearing a mask and face shield when they visit you.
- You and all household occupants in the same room will also need to wear a mask.

It will take some time for the Case Managers to visit everyone, but as always, they will be available by phone if you need them. They will also continue phone contact with you until they can visit in person.

We would also like to remind you that it is safe to have your usual services and supports come into your home. All the workers who visit you are also checked daily for COVID risks and have been trained in the appropriate infection control procedures to ensure they keep you safe. We previously sent you a fact sheet called "It's ok to have home care".

[https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/08/coronavirus-covid-19-it-s-ok-to-have-home-care-it-s-ok-to-have-home-care-fact-sheet\\_0.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/08/coronavirus-covid-19-it-s-ok-to-have-home-care-it-s-ok-to-have-home-care-fact-sheet_0.pdf)

If you have suspended any services/supports during the pandemic, please speak to your Case Manager about recommencing them.

Please continue with COVID safe practices to ensure we all remain safe. As a reminder we have some information on the next page.

Stay well.

Julie Williams, Program Manager.

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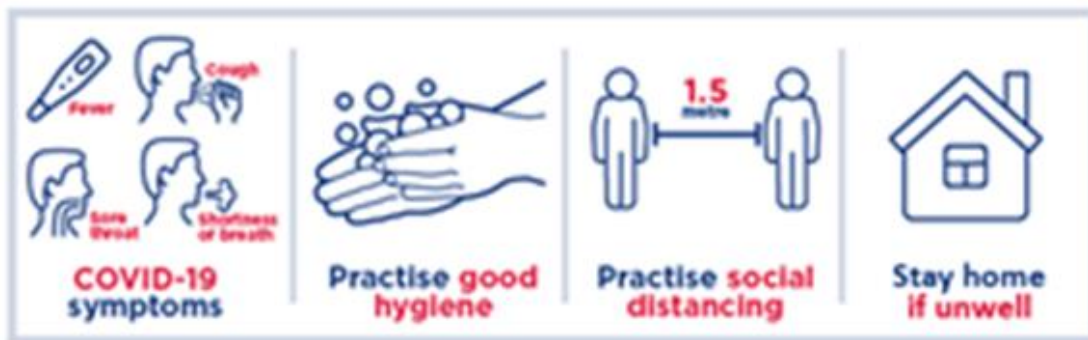
Home Care Packages  
1231 Plenty Road, Bundoora 3083  
Telephone: 9495 3219  
After Hours: 1300 881 078  
[www.nh.org.au](http://www.nh.org.au)

# HOME CARE PACKAGES NEWSLETTER

## COVID Safe

We need to all keep making COVID Safe Choices to help stop the spread of the virus.

- Keep physical distancing and wear a mask in public spaces.
- Practise good hygiene – thorough and frequent hand washing, sneezing into your elbow and throwing out used tissues.
- Protect others and stay at home if you're unwell. If you're experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms speak to your doctor about getting tested.
- If you have a smart mobile phone, download the COVID Safe app.



## Royal Commission into Aged Care

We continue to follow the Royal Commission into Aged Care, which is currently hearing submissions related to Home Care and we await the outcome and recommendations.

The Commission has provided a special report on the COVID-19 pandemic in aged care and the devastating loss of lives within Residential Care.

This report makes six recommendations, among them, a requirement that the Australian Government report to the Australian Parliament no later than 1 December 2020 on the progress of their implementation. The report identifies four areas for immediate action to support the aged care sector:

1. The Australian Government should fund Residential Care providers to ensure there are adequate staff available to deal with external visitors to enable a greater number of more meaningful visits between people receiving care and their loved ones.
2. The Australian Government should create Medicare Benefits Schedule items to increase the provision of allied health and mental health services to people living in residential aged care during the pandemic to prevent deterioration in their physical and mental health.
3. The Australian Government should publish a national aged care plan for COVID-19 and establish a national aged care advisory body.
4. The Australian Government should require providers to appoint infection control officers and should arrange for the deployment of accredited infection prevention and control experts into residential aged care homes.

If you wish to read this report in more detail, the full report is available at

<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/aged-care-and-covid-19-special-report>

## Thunderstorm Asthma

Thunderstorm asthma can affect those with asthma or hay fever – especially people who experience wheezing or coughing with their hay fever. That's why it's important for people with asthma or hay fever to know about thunderstorm asthma and what they can do to help protect themselves during grass pollen season.

It is important to understand that there are a large range of triggers that can set off a person's asthma symptoms. This includes the unique combination of high grass pollen in the air and the particular type of thunderstorm associated with thunderstorm asthma. Regardless of the trigger, the symptoms and treatment of asthma are essentially the same.

Epidemic thunderstorm asthma events are uncommon and don't occur every year. In Melbourne they can happen during grass pollen season from October through December.

Listen for alerts or warnings in the media or Download the Vic Emergency app if you have a smart phone.

### Protecting yourself if you have asthma

It is also important that you have an asthma action plan and that you see your GP to ensure that it includes advice for thunderstorm asthma. Always carry your reliever medication with you – this is your emergency asthma first aid medication.

### Where to get help

Medical assistance

- In an emergency, always call triple zero (000)
- Emergency department of your nearest hospital
- Your GP
- Your nearest pharmacy (for medication)
- NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- National Home Doctor Service Tel. 13 SICK (13 7425) for after-hours home GP visits (bulk billed).

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

## Your Health is important

It is important to keep healthy and well whilst you stay at home.

Doctors are taking all precautions to ensure your safety and that of the community, so there's no need to put off appointments or ignore symptoms during this pandemic.

Any chronic long term health issues need regular monitoring by your doctor.

The best thing to do is to call your doctor or usual health service and ask their advice.

It's important to phone first.

Always call 000 (triple zero) if there's a medical emergency.

If you need to go to a hospital emergency department,

strict measures are in place to keep people safe from coronavirus.



# HOME CARE PACKAGES NEWSLETTER

## Mental Health

The Australian Government recognises the mental health impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on everyone, in particular those in Victoria.

If you are feeling depressed or anxious and need someone to talk to, speak to your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan. The initial plan will be for 10 psychological therapy sessions, but in these difficult times, there are an additional 10 sessions available.

This will apply to people subject to public health orders restricting their movement within the state or territory issued at any time from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021, and to people who are required to isolate or quarantine under public health orders.

There are also the following mental wellbeing supports:

[Beyond Blue](https://beyondblue.org.au) 1300 224 636 or [beyondblue.org.au](https://beyondblue.org.au)

[Lifeline](https://lifeline.org.au) 13 11 14 or [lifeline.org.au](https://lifeline.org.au)

[Red Cross Connect](https://redcrossconnect.org.au) 1800 733 276 (to register)

[Older Persons COVID Support Line](https://olderpersons.org.au) 1800 171 866



## Staying Safe and Healthy At Home

Some of us are spending much longer periods in our homes and not being as active as we usually are. You may also be feeling more isolated as you have less visitors or are not going out as often. Social support groups are also currently not operating.

It is important to stay connected to family and friends during COVID and to keep moving.

Attached are some tips and exercises (from the University of Melbourne) for you to try at home.

## University of Melbourne Studies

Also attached to this newsletter are two exciting research studies with the University of Melbourne, that may interest you, or someone you know.

The first study, EXCEL is focussed using physical activity to improve well-being. This study is recruiting people living in the community, who feel that there has been some decline in their memory or have a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment and who also have mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety or low mood. This study is being delivered in a COVID safe manner - online and over the phone. Attached is the study flyer and there is a link to further information.

The HOMESIDE study is investigating the effects of a music therapy and reading program for people living with dementia and their caregivers. It is all delivered via telehealth (COVID friendly) and provides the carer with free access to some additional activities that they can use to engage the person. The details of how to participate are in attached flyer.

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



# HOME-BASED ACTIVITY IDEAS



## Physical Activity

Follow your physio and doctor's recommendations. Try: walks around the house or outside; seated exercise; using resistance bands or light weights; standing up/sitting down; squeezing a stress ball; hanging out laundry; vacuuming; dancing; sweeping; or raking.



## Movies and reading

Tune into/watch preferred movies, sports, radio and TV programs. Where possible, limit viewing of news programs - they may increase anxiety. Look through/read books of interest, magazines, newspapers and other preferred reading material or listen to audio books.



## Gardening

Plant seeds, seedlings or pot plants; rake; prune; sweep; water; weed; pick veggies or flowers; sit and enjoy the garden; watch birds and butterflies; or hang a bird feeder.



## Cognitive activities

Do crosswords, word searches; quizzes; sudoku; word puzzles, mazes or jigsaws. If a tablet (e.g. iPad) is available, there are apps that provide these brain activities.



## Reminiscing

Look through photos; read past letters/cards; share memories; document a memory or your life story (bit by bit) by writing/typing/recording it; or watch a slide show of photos. Use the internet to travel virtually (e.g. past neighbourhoods/zoos/art galleries/museums) or re-visit life in the past.



## Socially connecting

When it is not possible to see family, loved ones and friends face to face, try phone calls, video chats, emailing, messaging, or sending cards/letters. If available, use a tablet (e.g. iPad), smart phone or computer to connect with others. Skype, FaceTime, WeChat, Facebook, Instagram and other apps provide different modes to connect.

# HOME-BASED ACTIVITY IDEAS



## Music

Listen, sing-a-long, hum or dance to your favourite music. Try slower soothing music to relax and upbeat music to energise you. Make a playlist of your favourite tunes.



## Food and Cooking

Chop veggies; cook your favourite recipe; make a cake; order some takeout; enjoy some fresh fruit and veggies; bake some bread; make a nice hot coffee or tea.



## Sorting and Cleaning

Do the laundry; wash and dry the dishes; wipe down the kitchen benches; fold and put away clothing; sort your wardrobe and remove clothing you no longer wear; clean out a drawer or a cupboard; sort through photos or greeting cards; dust; clean windows or floors; tidy the shed or garage; polish the silver.



## Art and Creating

Try drawing, colouring in, colour by numbers or painting for enjoyment, relaxation and mindfulness. If a tablet (e.g. iPad) is available, download some art focused apps to try. Ask for help if you need some support to get started. Take an online art class or learn using YouTube clips.



## Relaxation

Listen to music; squeeze a stress ball; meditate; do a relaxation program (app or CD); mindfully colour-in, draw or paint; have a chat and hot cuppa; put your feet up and take 5 deep breaths.



## Games

Play a card game, scrabble, chess, checkers, draughts, mahjong, backgammon, tic tac toe or Monopoly. Try the game on a tablet device or the computer. Play against the device or others.

Do things you enjoy ● Try something new



# Do you care for someone living with dementia?

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS  
ACROSS AUSTRALIA NOW FOR THIS  
FREE TELE-HEALTH TRIAL



Now offering  
face to face  
sessions  
delivered  
online!

## Who is the study for?

This study is for people living with dementia and their family (or informal) caregivers. You can participate in the study if:

- You or your loved one has a diagnosis of dementia OR significant memory problems
- You are or you have a family caregiver
- You live together at home

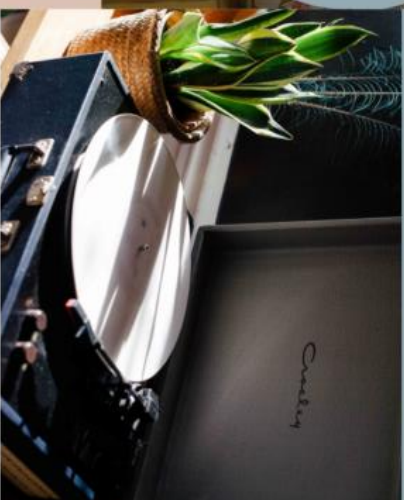


## Our approach

When you participate in this study, you will be randomly assigned to either a home-based:

- music program
- reading program
- a control group (no program)

The programs are designed to be delivered by family caregivers, who will receive **face-to-face sessions delivered online** from qualified health professionals



## ABOUT HOMESIDE

HOMESIDE is an international study investigating the effects of music and reading activities for people living with dementia and their family caregivers.

Previous research indicates that such activities like music and reading may help to increase wellbeing, strengthen relationships, and improve care.

In our study, HOMESIDE, this effect will be investigated comprehensively for the first time.

"..... the opportunity to  
experience shared  
meaningful time  
together"



## DURING THE HOMESIDE PROJECT:

- Everything will take place face-to-face (via an online mode)
- You will participate in the study for 6 months
- You will receive training from experienced professionals to use music or reading activities at home
- You both will be asked to fill out questionnaires at 3 time points

## THE MUSIC AND READING PROGRAMS WILL:

- Be tailored to your individual preferences and needs
- Offer opportunities to share meaningful moments together
- Support you to use reading and music in your daily life
- Offer opportunities to sing together, to listen to music and stories, to dance, to play music, to read, and to communicate with each other

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PARTICIPATING, SIMPLY CONTACT US

[homeside-australia@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:homeside-australia@unimelb.edu.au)

(03) 8344 4449

[www.homesidestudy.eu](http://www.homesidestudy.eu)



# Are you feeling down, stressed or worried?

## Concerned about memory or thinking changes?

Physical activity can help to reduce stress, anxiety and improve low mood.  
It can also support your brain health.



The University of Melbourne's  
*EXCEL (Exercise for Cognitive Health)* study  
aims to to improve wellbeing through physical activity at home.

We want to hear your thoughts and ideas about physical activity if you:



Are aged between 45-80 years old and live in the community



Experience mild to moderate symptoms of low mood (depression) or stress (anxiety)



Have memory concerns or have noticed changes in your memory and/or thinking



Are happy to take part in a phone or video chat with a researcher (about 60 mins)

You don't need to be physically active to take part!

To join the study or for more information, contact:

Rebecca Moorhead

(03) 8387 2483

[rmoorhead@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:rmoorhead@unimelb.edu.au)

Participation  
will include  
a \$20 gift  
voucher



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE