

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

Level Four Lockdown happened very quickly, and it is normal to feel anxious, stressed, fearful or lonely at a time like this.

Covid-19 is changing our lives, and the new-to-New Zealand Delta variant is much easier to transfer to others. Whether you are a person living with dementia or you are supporting a person with dementia, it is important to know what you can do to stay as safe as possible, and to look after your wellbeing. The following information is to help you to remain safe and to help build resilience during lock-down and beyond.

PREVENTION & GOOD HAND HYGIENE

Use hand sanitiser at public indoor environments. Wash and dry hands regularly at home, especially when returning from public places. Do this together, make it fun. Cough into your elbow.

CONTINUE ACCESSING SUPPORT NETWORKS

Have regular phone, skype, zoom or facetime catchups with family and friends. Plan some contact every day at a time that works for you. Call us if you are concerned about anything, we are here to help.

STAY POSITIVE

Go back to strategies that worked in previous times of stress. We are all working in this together to keep everyone safe.

MAINTAIN WELLBEING

Acknowledge feelings and remind yourself we are alone together. Lower the bar and expect a bit less of yourself and others. Make a list of what calms and restores you. Identify and agree on each person's quiet space.

FACE MASKS

It is now mandatory to wear facemasks when visiting any public indoor environments such as supermarkets or pharmacies, and when using any public transport. If you or particularly a person with dementia is not able to wear a face mask consistently without becoming distressed, then don't force the issue. Instead, avoid public indoor environments and have others such as family, friends or neighbors pick up your supplies. If this is a difficulty call us to discuss. If you do not have masks to use please call us and we will try and get some to you if you are living in the Christchurch city area. You can purchase masks online, at pharmacies and in some supermarkets.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

Use an object at home such as the couch to show what two metres looks like. Maintain this distance from others when you are out walking or in any public indoor environment. You must maintain this distance from all people other than those in your bubble. Have people leave things at the door.

KEEP WITH USUAL MEDICATION

Keep to your usual medication regime. Phone or email your GP to get new prescriptions. Set reminders for taking medicines. Make an appointment to get the covid vaccination if you have not already had it or done so.

<https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/>

KEEP ACTIVE

Keeping active can help to lessen anxiety and help you to feel better.' Try Dementia Canterbury exercises

<https://vimeo.com/404867867/7646b0c9e4>.

Walk in your local neighborhood or in your garden. Engage in activities you enjoy (music, dance, being outside, silence) For more activity information and suggestions check the links below. Dementia Canterbury has a limited number of activity bags which we are able to deliver to your door (contactless and if you live in the Chch region), if you are interested please phone us.

LIMIT NEWS TIME

Limit time and exposure to constant news updates. Separate facts from fiction. If media coverage is causing anxiety turn it off.

BE PREPARED

Who can you call if you need help urgently?

Identify a person who can step in if someone becomes unwell. Write it down so it is handy should you need it. Consider an emergency plan that includes all vital information in the event of an emergency. Follow the link for an example <https://www.dementiacanterbury.org.nz/sites/default/files/DNZ%20Plan.pdf> or if you want some help with this call us to discuss.

HELP SHOPPING

The Student Volunteer Army grocery service is available nationwide to vulnerable people unable to leave their homes and shop.

Many supermarkets and pharmacies also offer online ordering delivery options.

SVA Shopping: <https://shop.sva.org.nz/>



KEEP UP A ROUTINE

Try and keep orientated to the day and time.

Have regular meals and activities, Focus on activities that stimulate and challenge your brain in the morning, and choose activities to help calm and relax in the afternoon and evening. Go to bed at a regular time .

Here are some ideas to keep you occupied if you have internet access:

There is a lot available on the Internet. Have a look at some of these sites:

THE SOFA SINGERS:

Singing online bringing people together from around the world <https://www.thesofasingers.com>

MUSIC FOR DEMENTIA:

An inspirational musical guide for people living with dementia and their care-partners <https://musicfordementia2020.com>

CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS:

A walk through the Christchurch Botanic Gardens <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3JqLCfjBCg>

TRAVEL:

Armchair travel, a sensory experience for seniors at <https://www.nzgeo.com/vr/>

CHRISTCHURCH LIBRARIES:

You can discover the world from your armchair with ebooks, movies, magazines, newspapers, some of the resources at your fingertips at <https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/>

If you are already a library member, your library card and PIN is all you need. Online membership is available (free) at <https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/join-the-library/>.

SIT AND BE FIT DEMENTIA CANTERBURY ONLINE EXERCISES:

See the next exercise video at <https://vimeo.com/404867867/7646b0c9e4>

Seek professional advice if anyone in your bubble, whether with dementia or not, feels overwhelmed.

For advice or support please contact us at Dementia Canterbury. We are regularly checking the phone lines and are available to answer your email enquiries.

PHONE: 0800 444 776 or 03 379 2590

EMAIL: admin@dementiacanterbury.org.nz

WEBSITE: www.dementiacanterbury.org.nz