



# Prevent the spread of COVID-19 when visiting care homes for older people

Old age is a significant risk factor for severe illness from COVID-19, and it is everyone's responsibility to protect older people against infection. The COVID-19 vaccine provides good protection for those who have been vaccinated, but it is still unclear to what extent a vaccinated person can spread the infection further. Once we know more about how the vaccine protects against the spread of infection, general advice and recommendations may change. For the time being, we need to continue taking several measures to prevent the spread of infection during visits to care homes.

When planning a visit to a care home for older people, there are several things to consider to minimise the risk of infection. If both you and your loved one are vaccinated, you may be less likely to become seriously ill. Even if the person you are visiting has been vaccinated, everyone needs to continue to do what they can to protect other residents who have not been vaccinated. Here are three important things to keep in mind when visiting:

- Meet only when you all feel healthy. It is better to cancel a visit than to risk spreading infection in the care home.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before, during and after the visit for at least 20 seconds. Infectious agents can get stuck on your hands and spread further when you touch someone's hand or through objects. Use hand sanitiser if you are not able to wash your hands.



## What to consider when visiting a person who lives in a care home for older people

- Stay at home if you feel ill. Cancel the visit even in case of mild symptoms.
  - Wash your hands before, during and after the visit.
  - Even if the person you are visiting has been vaccinated, you need to keep your distance from other people during the visit, both indoors and outdoors.
  - There are local procedures for visits. Ask the staff about the procedures that apply at the care home you are visiting.
- Keep your distance during the visit, both from other people staying at the care home and from staff and other visitors. Also remember to limit physical contact with the person you're visiting. ( Text removed here )

## Local procedures

Despite the fact that many residents have been vaccinated, procedures need to remain in place to limit the spread of infection. Each care home has unique circumstances and puts in place local procedures to prevent the spread of infection during visits. These circumstances can relate to the layout of the premises, the number of people living at the care home, or its organisation and staff. For this reason, visitors need to talk to the staff about what applies at the specific care home before they make a visit.

For example, different care homes may have different procedures for appointments for visits, staff who meet visitors at the entrance to the property, special visitor rooms, or limiting the number of visitors at any time to avoid crowding.

Visiting procedures are subject to change in the event of local outbreaks.