

Keeping engaged



People aged 70 years and over are at greater risk of more serious illness if they are infected with COVID-19. And they are likely to have to self-isolate for longer than younger age groups. For this reason the team at NARI, with input from our research volunteers, has developed a series of tip sheets. This one is about keeping engaged.

It is important to follow the [Government's recommendations](#) to minimise spread of the COVID-19 virus, and to care for yourself and your loved ones. However, here is more information on what you can do to keep engaged:

Why it is important to keep engaged

We all need to keep in contact with others and perhaps, more importantly, maintain our opportunities to contribute to the wellbeing of others.

Many of the activities we engage in as volunteers, carers, family members, friends and workers, are more difficult at present, but there are still ways we can keep engaged.

How to keep engaged during COVID-19

- The most obvious and foolproof way is by **phone** – almost everyone has a phone and knows how to use it. Older people in residential care or isolated neighbours can still be contacted by phone as can family members and friends – it is a good way to keep in touch.
- **On-line platforms**, such as Zoom and Skype, are great ways to keep in touch with family and friends, and to keep up work or volunteer activities. These platforms allow you to see and talk to other people using a video call. Zoom and Skype can be used on any device that has internet connection, including computers, tablets (such as iPads), and smart phones (such as iPhones). You can buy a suitable device on-line if you don't have one already. Make it a project to get to know how to use these platforms and devices – if you don't know already. If you need help getting started, **Be Connected** provides short courses on the basics of technology – see contact details on the next page.
If you don't have an internet connection, you can set this up through your landline or mobile phone. Call your phone company and ask how to get the internet connected, or ask your friends and family what internet provider they use.
- **Writing letters** is another excellent way to keep in touch – Australia Post is still operating and receiving a letter is always a joy, especially when it is not a bill! Consider including a photo as a way of connecting. You can also still send parcels.

“Don't forget to phone old friends and relations now and then to see how they are managing. These are often only once a year contacts at Christmas, so it's a good thing to do.”

– Edith



More information

Information on Internet and Technology for Older People

- Australian Seniors Computer Club Association (ASCCA): the national peak body for seniors and technology. ASCCA provides lessons and help for older people wishing to learn how to use technology. Contact them on (02) 9286 3871 to find your local club branch
- **Be Connected:** a government website providing short courses on the basics of technology. Visit www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au or call 1300 795 897
- GCF Learn Free: a website providing free learning material on the basics of technology. Visit <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/>
- Many councils, community centres and neighbourhood houses also provide beginner courses on computers and technology. Contact your local council to see if online courses are being offered at this time.

Australian Government Department of Health

- Latest coronavirus (COVID-19) health updates <https://bit.ly/3bXFSb6>
- Collection of COVID-19 resources, including translated resources. <https://bit.ly/380OwHe>
- Tip sheet: Coronavirus advice for older people <https://bit.ly/3aMvsLp>

National Coronavirus Health Information Line

Call 1800 020 080 if you are seeking information on novel coronavirus. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

Advice for Carers

Carers Australia: Visit carersaustralia.com.au for a range of information for carers.

Call 1800 242 636 for short-term counselling support services for carers and their families.