

### HAPPY EASTER

On behalf of the Westmont team, we would like to wish everyone a Happy Easter and hope you get to spend some time with your family. Critical services are still being delivered over Easter including personal care, medication assistance, meals on wheels, meal preparation and respite care.

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### COVID 19 UPDATE

Booster vaccinations protect you from getting very sick with newer variants of COVID-19. Recharge your immunity with a booster dose and protect yourself before winter.

Boosters should be taken 6 months following the previous dose or 6 months after your last COVID infection.

Boosters are free for all Victorians. You can get them from your local pharmacy or GP.

Antivirals are an effective treatment to reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and should be commenced as soon as you test positive to covid 19 and are most effective when administered within 5 days of your positive test. Antivirals are recommended for the following groups:

- 70 years of age or older, regardless of risk factors and with or without symptoms.
- From 1 April 2023, the eligibility for treatment of COVID-19 has been expanded to Australians aged 60 to 69 with at least 1 risk factor that tests positive to COVID-19.
- 50 years of age or older with 2 additional risk factors for developing severe disease or have had a past COVID 19 infection resulting in hospitalisation.
- First Nations people, 30 years of age or older and with 1 additional risk factor for developing severe disease or have had past COVID-19 infections resulting in hospitalisation.

Risk factors include living with disability with multiple conditions and/or frailty, neurological conditions like stroke or dementia, chronic respiratory conditions including COPD, moderate or severe asthma, obesity or diabetes, heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies and kidney failure or cirrhosis. People who are moderately to severely immunocompromised, may be eligible for antiviral treatments.

To access antiviral medication quickly, telehealth services are available with any GP for patients with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the past 7 days. If you can't get an appointment quickly with your GP, you can call the Department of Health Direct free helpline on 1800 022 222.

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### 2023 FLU IMMUNISATION

Don't forget to arrange for your annual flu vaccination. The [COVID-19 vaccine](#) doesn't protect you against the [flu](#), so you should still have your annual flu shot. Local pharmacies generally have walk in or appointments for the vaccinations and local doctors provide vaccinations too.

The flu vaccination can be administered at the same time as the covid 19 booster and is safe and effective.

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### MEALS ON WHEELS IS CHANGING

We are pleased to advise that Westmont in partnership with Fernbank, a local NDIS employment provider is providing meals to our meals on wheels clients on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The meals are still being offered at the same price this financial year. Fernbank will be offering a 2-course meal consisting of a main meal (including a vegetarian option) and a hearty soup or desert/cake or slice. All special dietary options including gluten free and dairy free are available. Fernbank is renowned for its bakery delicacies.

We are fortunate, that the Wodonga Hospital continues to provide wholesome and nutritious meals to our clients. The hospital will continue to provide meals for the MOW program on a Monday and Friday and on the weekend. The inclusion of two providers allows us to provide more choice and variety to our clients. If you receive MOW on Tuesday, Wednesday and or Thursday you only need to review the menu that we recently sent to you and let us know your meal preferences.

We do our best to meet your service needs, but some services may be subject to changes or late cancellations. Many of our clients are aware that we are experiencing ongoing staff recruitment issues, which is a widespread issue across all industries and has increased substantially since COVID-19.

This may mean that we may have to cancel non-essential services at short notice if we have carers away ill. We will only cancel services as a last resort. The onset of winter may see a rise in illnesses within our staff. We don't allow staff to attend work if unwell and have a strict COVID-19 testing regime with staff required to RAT test regularly. Essential services such as personal care, meals on wheels, meal preparation and respite services are prioritised by us. Unfortunately, with staff absenteeism, we cannot always guarantee the same service time or carer. We completely understand that you make appointments around our service times, so we ask for your cooperation in keeping the morning or afternoon of your service free. If significant changes occur with your service such as the service changing to another day or the time changes by more than 2 hours, we will advise you, generally via text message.

If your service is unfortunately cancelled, we try and reschedule your service on another day if possible. If you are prepared to be flexible with your service days/times and can respond with a carer attending at short notice (with 30 minutes notice), we can place you on a waiting list and keep you updated.

- We would like to take the time to thank you for your ongoing support. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding during these difficult times.
- We realise a lack of care staff that can lead to service changes and cancellations directly impacts our ability to provide care services for you at home, with seamless continuity, quality and the consistency that we pride ourselves on.
- We would like to apologise for any inconvenience and ask for your understanding during these difficult times.

