

# Social Wellness and Coronavirus

We all must do our bit to stay at home and follow physical distancing recommendations by health authorities. This means changing the way we interact with other people – using technology, such as the Internet, computers and phones, to keep in touch with workmates, friends and relatives.

## Keeping your distance...

Physical distancing does not mean locking yourself indoors.

If you practice good hygiene and keep 1.5 metres from others, you can still enjoy:

- Gardening in your backyard or balcony
- Getting some sun on the porch
- Talking to your neighbours (from a distance)

## ...while keeping connected

Keep connected with others through technology on your computer, ipad or smartphone:

- Skype is a videocalling program where you can video call people for free ([skype.com](https://www.skype.com))
- Facebook is a social media site that lets you interact with friends ([facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com))
- WhatsApp is a free messaging and videocalling program ([whatsapp.com](https://www.whatsapp.com))

## What if I don't have the Internet?

If you do not have access to the Internet, there are many ways to keep socially connected.

- Spend some time connecting with the people you are living with
- Phone someone to check in with them
- Leave a note at someone's front door
- Organise safe interactions with your friends or relatives - like writing letters to each other

## Can I see my grandchildren?

You may be faced with the difficult decision of whether it is safe to see your grandchildren.

Institute member **Dr Stephanie Ward** suggests that families discuss the impacts of physical distancing. "There are many ways to still stay connected with your grandchildren, or other children in your life, if apart - talking at a safe distance, video calling, or mailing letters to each other."

## Living with Dementia

If you are living with Dementia, or caring for someone with Dementia, this might be a heightened period of isolation with many services closing.

**Dementia Australia** have an online chat and other sources of assistance and support at [dementia.org.au/help/line/webchat](https://www.dementia.org.au/help/line/webchat)

## I need to talk to someone

The **National COVID Older Persons Information Hotline** supports older people feeling lonely or distressed about Coronavirus.

Call 1800 171 866 between 8:30am-5:00pm (AEST) on weekdays.



## More tips

The following sources of information provide a range of ways to support your social wellness:

- **Probus Clubs** provides a great opportunity to connect with older people in the local community. Search for your local clubs at [probussouthpacific.org/directories/lookup](https://www.probussouthpacific.org/directories/lookup) or call 1300 630 488.
- **Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association** have a directory of computer clubs you can browse and join [ascca.org.au/index.php/seniors-computer-courses/computer-clubs-directory](https://www.ascca.org.au/index.php/seniors-computer-courses/computer-clubs-directory).
- **SANE Australia** have an online forum where you can chat with health professionals and other people about your thoughts and feelings. Read more and register at [saneforums.org](https://www.saneforums.org)