

Wednesday, 7 September 2023

Dear friends,

Gastro outbreaks at Harbison

This letter is to confirm that we have Norovirus outbreaks at Harbison. We are working closely with the Public Health Unit and have activated our Outbreak Management Plan. We have notified families of infected residents and their GPs directly.

We are limiting visitors to one visitor per resident to help reduce the spread of the virus. This limit does not apply to end-of-life visits.

Visitors may be required to wear PPE, including gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection. Visitors who do not know how to safely put on and remove PPE should avoid visiting until the outbreaks are resolved. Signage is displayed to assist with PPE, but we do not have the resources to train visitors who do not already know how to use PPE.

Infected residents are isolating in their rooms under contact and droplet infection prevention and control precautions. Residents who are concerned about becoming infected should minimise movement around the home and contact with other residents and visitors.

Norovirus is highly contagious. The main symptoms are watery diarrhoea and/or vomiting. **Hand hygiene is critical in preventing infection.** Soap and water should be used because alcohol sanitiser used to prevent COVID-19 transmission is not effective against norovirus.

Vulnerable people, including younger and older people and people with compromised immune systems, should avoid Harbison until the outbreaks are resolved. More information is available from NSW Health

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/factsheets/pages/viral-gastroenteritis.aspx>

Harbison

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We have escalated cleaning protocols in line with our Outbreak Management Plan but please note that we have suspended vacuum cleaning because it may recirculate norovirus.

Visitors must follow the directions of staff and will be asked to leave if they refuse or cannot comply with PPE and hand hygiene protocols. Your cooperation is vital to limiting the spread of the virus and minimising the number of infected residents.

Infected residents will be released from isolation when they have been symptom free for at least 48 hours, so the isolation burden is significantly less than for COVID-19.

Our care teams will be working together to minimise the adverse impacts of isolation and restrictions on residents during the outbreak.

2023 referendum

There will be a referendum on Saturday, 14 October 2023. Voting is compulsory for eligible Australians. If someone is not able to vote, for example if they are living with advanced dementia, there is a process to remove them from the electoral roll. More information is available from the Australian Electoral Commission

<https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/>

We expect there will be mobile voting offered to Harbison residents, and we will provide more information when we receive it. Meanwhile, if you require assistance, please let a member of staff or a member of your family or friends network know.

Yours sincerely,



David Cochran
Chief Executive Officer

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