

Personal alarms

A guide for patients and their carers

This guide will provide you with information on:

- types of personal alarms
- how personal alarms work
- where to access a personal alarm.

What are personal alarms?

Personal alarms are devices used to alert someone (such as neighbours, relatives, friends or a monitoring centre) in an emergency. They can help you to feel more confident being alone at home. They can also give your family and friends peace of mind.

There are two basic types of personal alarms - **monitored** and **non-monitored**.

Monitored personal alarms

Monitored personal alarms are usually installed as an attachment to your home phone.

They include a pendant or wrist band that can be worn at all times. An emergency call can be made simply by pressing the button on the pendant or wrist band.

- When you press the button, a signal is sent to the monitoring centre. The monitoring centre will contact you to check that the alarm was not pressed by accident. If you do need help, they will put into action your plan. This could be contacting a family member, friend or emergency service.
- Staff at the monitoring centre will usually have some of your medical history and information on how to access your residence. This information may be passed onto ambulance staff if required.

Non-monitored personal alarms

Non-monitored personal alarms are not connected to a monitoring centre. They are usually connected to an automated telephone system or to an alerting alarm.

- Automated telephone systems dial pre-set phone numbers for people that you nominate at the time of setting up the service.
- A pre-recorded message will be played when the call is answered to notify of your need for help.
- The system will continue to call your programmed numbers until your call is answered.
- The system relies on you nominating people who will be available to answer the call and help you if you require it.

Alerting alarms

- Alerting alarms such as call buttons, wireless door chimes and intercoms, or personal attack alarms are systems that work by sounding an alert noise.
- With the press of a button, it may notify nearby neighbours or family/carers that you are in need of emergency assistance.
- It is important to note that these systems rely upon somebody being close enough to hear your alarm, and that person being aware that the alarm means that you require assistance.

Monitored alarm suppliers

Mepacs	Tel: 1800 451 300
approx cost	\$220 (install and equipment) or \$180 (with Seniors card) + \$33 (per month monitoring fee)
with referral	\$100 (install and equipment) + \$33 (per month monitoring fee)
options	daily phone call for extra \$6 per month
Care Call	Tel: 1300 130 100
approx cost	\$185 (install and equipment) + \$102 (3 months monitoring fee)
with referral	\$165 (install and equipment) + \$95 (3 months monitoring fee)
Safety Link	Tel: 1800 813 617
approx cost	\$220 (install and equipment) or \$144 (with Seniors, Carers, Pension or Healthcare card) + \$31.20 (per month monitoring fee)
with referral	\$120 (install and equipment) + \$29.15 (per month monitoring fee)
Vital Call	Tel: 1300 360 808
approx cost	\$238.15 (install and equipment) + \$139.70 (3 months monitoring fee)
with referral	\$135 (install and equipment) + \$96.88 (3 months monitoring fee)
Tunstall	Tel: 1800 603 377
approx cost	\$231 (install and equipment) + \$43 (per month monitoring fee)
with referral	\$176 (install and equipment) + \$29.90 (per month monitoring fee)
Insurance Lifeguard	Tel: 1800 636 226
approx cost	\$259 (install and equipment) or \$159 (self installation) + \$380 (12 months monitoring fee)
OZ Care - Care Link	Tel: 1800 888 002
approx cost	\$20 (install and equipment) + \$295 lifetime rental + \$1 (per day monitoring fee) <i>*Non profit organisation - St Vincent's</i>

Monitored alarm suppliers continued...

First Call Medical Alarms	Tel: 1300 408 080
approx cost	\$315 (install and equipment) + \$125 (6 months monitoring fee)

Automated telephone system suppliers

Care Alert Smart Dialer	Tel: 1300 758 595
approx cost	\$275 (+ postage and handling) <i>There are no further monitoring costs or ongoing charges.</i>
Care Tech Systems	Tel: 1300 669 507
approx cost	\$488 (install and equipment) <i>This system is set up to call six phone numbers (relatives and friends). There is no monitoring fee or ongoing charges.</i>
First Call Medical Alarms	Tel: 1300 408 080
approx cost	\$315 (equipment and delivery) <i>There are no further monitoring costs or ongoing charges. There is an option to add monitoring to this system for an extra cost.</i>
Sure Safe Emergency Systems	Tel: 1300 739 991
approx cost	\$229 (equipment and free delivery) <i>There are no further monitoring costs or ongoing charges.</i>

Other options

Silver Cord Service

Tel: 1300 360 455

Silver Cord Service offers companionship for people who feel isolated. It is a free service for HACC clients.

There are two types of volunteer calls:

- friendship calls
- security calls (more structured contact).

Ask for a 'Silver Cord Telephone Reassurance form' to apply.

Telecross Red Cross Service

Tel: 1300 885 698

Telecross is a free service that provides the elderly or disabled with a reassuring daily phone call to ensure that they are safe and well. If this call goes unanswered, an agreed emergency procedure will be activated and help arranged if necessary.

You can self refer or be referred by a relative, friend or health professional.

Other options continued...

Mobile phone

You may wish to purchase a mobile phone. Handsets vary in price. Pre paid sim cards are available from \$10.00 per month. Further credit can be purchased as required.

Contact your nearest mobile phone dealer for more information on pre-paid or plan-based phones to compare prices.

Questions?

If you have any questions related to personal alarms or the information contained in this brochure, please contact your occupational therapist (OT):

Occupational Therapy Department

Fitzroy campus:

Tel: 03 9231 3850

St Georges campus:

Tel: 03 9816 0516

Caritas Christi campus:

Tel: 03 9853 2344

NB - This list of suppliers is a guide only. Prices may be subject to change.

Please check your Yellow Pages directory under "Alerting Systems &/or Services" for a full list of suppliers. We recommend you contact the suppliers individually for further detail.

Financial assistance

You may be eligible for financial assistance through the Personal Alarm Victoria scheme. Contact your local council to request an assessment. There may be a long wait to access this support.

Other help

Further information on personal alarm systems can be accessed through the Victorian Independent Living Centre (ILC).

Tel: (03) 9362 6111 or TTY 9314 9001

Email: ilc@yooralla.com.au