COVID-19

Long Term Care Resident Visitation Principles

Latest updates are included in BLUE and listed in the Change Tracker on the final page.

Purpose

• The purpose of this document is to ensure the philosophy of resident and family centered and partnered care are foundational to visitation and to provide thoughtful guidance to minimize the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in Long Term Care (LTC) facilities. This document is intended to support the Long-Term Care operators in fulfilling the needs of residents to have regular communication and visitation with close family and/or friends and care from family caregivers who are essential partners in care.

• The principles and guidance in this document is NOT intended to be prescriptive and does NOT replace clinical and operational judgement of staff and leaders of the LTC facilities when making operational plans and decisions to support visitations. This guideline strongly emphasizes the importance of a resident and family centered approach and a need for flexibility and compassion in operational decision-making regarding visitations. It’s also important to consider the needs of those residents whose health and wellbeing is at higher risk without the presence of family caregivers e.g. those with physical disability, cognitive impairment, etc.

• This guideline supports the role and importance of:
  ➢ “Designated family caregivers” - any person whom the resident and/or substitute decision maker identifies and designates as their family caregiver. As essential partners in care, these individuals actively and regularly participate in providing care and may support feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity, and assistance in decision-making
  ➢ “General visitor” - family and friends who visit for social reasons
  ➢ “Essential Service Provider” - individuals providing essential support services as determined by the care team (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP).
  ➢ “Non-Essential Service Provider” - individuals providing support services that are not deemed essential and can be shut down during pandemic, e.g. hairdressers.
  ➢ “Volunteers” – individuals who are registered and trained at the site are not considered visitors and are strongly encouraged to be involved with facilitating visitations.

Principles

1. Recognizing the important role that ongoing connection with family and loved ones plays in the health and well-being of residents, LTC operators will actively support the ability of residents to remain connected with their loved ones during COVID-19.
2. LTC operators are encouraged to identify and implement creative solutions to facilitate and actively support virtual visits (e.g. video call on cell phones or tablets) as an alternative means for residents to connect with their families and friends. It is recognized that this solution may not be feasible for all residents or families and is dependent on availability of technology.

3. Visitor limitations are directly related to the presence/transmission of COVID-19 in the province as determined by Chief Public Health Officer. Limitations are separated into three distinct levels, each of which is detailed in the Appendix.

| Red (Critical): Outbreak or High Level of COVID-19 Activity |
| Orange (Restricted): Moderate Level of COVID-19 Activity |
| Yellow: (Caution) - Very Low Level of COVID-19 Activity |

4. In collaboration with Public Health, LTC Operators will determine the need to suspend all visits in the case of a confirmed/potential COVID-19 outbreak in the facility or local area or upon the direction of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer. Resumption of visits will also be collaboratively determined with Public Health.

5. Visitors must adhere to public health advice regarding close contact (maintain a distance of 6 feet/2 metres), respiratory hygiene and other Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) and public health (PH) measures while visiting. Consideration may be given to allowing brief hugs and handholding while maintaining as much distance as possible between the faces of the resident and visitor and ensuring the availability of alcohol-based hand rub for prompt and effective hand hygiene both immediately before and after these encounters. Visiting family members from the same household and/or bubble do not have to physically distance from one another.

6. General visitors will follow precautions, including:
   - Hand hygiene upon entry to facility and before/after contact with healthcare workers or healthcare environment.
   - Wear a mask at all times (visitor to bring and wear a non-medical mask for the duration of their visit in level green or orange unless directed to wear facility-provided procedure mask). Wear a procedure mask when in red.
   - No eating or drinking while in facility by general visitors. Mask must be worn for the duration of the visit
   - Maintain physical distance of six feet, two meters at all times.

7. Designated family caregivers will follow precautions, including:
   - Hand hygiene upon entry to facility and before/after contact with healthcare workers or healthcare environment.
   - Wearing a procedure mask and eye protection at all times
   - If eating or drinking while in the facility, maintain a physical distance of six feet/two meters. Remove PPE carefully, including appropriate hand hygiene. After eating or drinking, perform hand hygiene and don mask and eye protection
   - Maintaining physical distancing of six feet, two meters any time PPE is removed.

8. Screening of all visitors must occur, including assessment for symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19 prior to entry: https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ltc-letter-to-families-code-red-eng.pdf
9. Each site will need to develop specific plans for enabling outdoor/indoor/outdoor shelter/alternative designated indoor space visitation by visitors due to differing layouts and the varied needs of residents and families. Plans must be communicated to residents and their families.

10. Each site and region must develop a rapid problem solving and appeal process to ensure residents and families concerns related to visitation are addressed in timely manner.

11. Operators must proactively and collaboratively work with the residents/designates to identify up to two "designated family caregiver(s)" i.e. only those close family and/or friends who have a clearly established pattern of involvement in providing active care and support to the resident’s emotional wellbeing, health, and quality of life. These family caregivers will participate regularly in the care of the residents and sites should consider providing them with some identification such as badge or sticker. In addition, residents/designates may identify general visitors who wish to visit for social reasons.

12. A plan must be developed in collaboration with the resident/designate to determine the nature, duration, frequency, and timing of the visits by these visitors. Family and friends of the residents will always be treated with compassion and understanding in order to accommodate special circumstances. Visitors will be provided with access to basic facilities such as washrooms.

13. Each operator will determine when residents can have visits on the property. Operators may implement regularly scheduled general visits through a booking system or designated drop-in times and provide reasonable flexibility to accommodate for varied circumstances of residents and families, e.g. family members who work. Sign in/Sign Out process must be established for all visitors in order to support contact tracing, if required.

14. Considerations for On-site Outdoor Visits
   - Reasonable number of visitors per resident may visit at a time depending on the appropriate space availability.
   - Minors (under 14) are required to be accompanied by an adult.
   - Sites are to determine overall number of visitors at one time.
   - Based on evaluation of risk and clinical judgement and in collaboration/discussion with the resident/delegate, the site may be unable to facilitate outdoor visits for certain residents.
   - The site reserves the right to cancel visits due to inclement weather.
   - Low risk activities for residents and families such as walks around the property/block may be considered.
   - Public health advice regarding physical distancing (at least 6 feet/2 metres), hand hygiene and other appropriate measures must be maintained while visiting
     - Wearing of non-medical (cloth) masks during outdoor visits is not required but is strongly encouraged.

15. Considerations for Indoor Visits
   - Designated family caregivers should have flexibility to visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/or as determined with the care team, without the need to formally book an appointment, as long as it does not negatively impact the care of other residents or the ability of other family caregivers to provide care and support. These family caregivers should have reasonable access to both indoor
(including resident room) and outdoor areas as essential partners in care but must maintain physical distancing from other residents and staff. They must have training in and abide by Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements. For those residents without family to designate, consideration should be given to allowing designation of up to two individuals (friends/loved ones) to ensure each resident will continue to have access to visitation.

- For **general visitors**, outdoor visits or visits in outdoor all-season shelters/designated indoor visitation rooms are preferred and encouraged to keep the number of individuals entering the facility and resident rooms to a minimum. However, sites may consider some visits from general visitors on case by case basis in resident’s room if the resident is in a single room; for double and multi-bedded rooms or for other reasons, an alternative indoor space must be identified. General visitors may be escorted by staff to – and from – the designated visitation area, the escort should minimize the visitor’s need to touch surfaces on route to the visiting space, e.g., the escort should open the doors, press the elevator buttons, etc.

- Visitation with other residents is not recommended
- **General visitors** should be informed that they are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering in level green or orange and they should bring their own. In exceptional circumstances, a procedure mask may be provided by the facility. **A procedure mask will also be provided when in red where visitation is permitted.**

- Visitors must perform hand hygiene when entering/leaving the building.

16. **All-season Visitation Shelters/Designated Indoor Visitation Rooms**

- All-season visitation shelters are locations intended to support ongoing visits by **general visitors when outdoor visits are not possible e.g., during cold weather.**
- Where all-season visitation shelters do not exist and outdoor visitation is not possible, sites may designate an indoor visitation room(s) with easy visitor access from outside the PCH and where the same public health requirements as those in place for outdoor shelters may be maintained.
- Visitors may be escorted by staff to – and from – the designated area (all-season visitation shelter or designated indoor visitation room), the escort should minimize the visitor’s need to touch surfaces on route to the visiting space.
- Visitors must adhere to public health advice regarding physical distancing (at least 6 feet/2 metres), hand hygiene and other Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) and public health (PH) measures while visiting.
  - Wearing of non-medical (cloth) masks is required when in level green or orange and a procedure mask, provided by the facility, when in red
- Visitors must perform hand hygiene when entering/leaving the shelter/building.
- Sites are to determine overall number of visitors at one time in the shelter/ designated indoor visitation room. Refer to: [https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-physical-distancing-and-restoring-services.pdf](https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-physical-distancing-and-restoring-services.pdf).
- Visits will be pre-booked utilizing an appropriate and equitable process as outlined by the Operator.

17. **Hairdressers** (when permitted in Level 3) will adhere to the following additional measures:
• Hair salon will comply with public health occupancy/limit and the physical distancing requirements.
• Hair Salon staff will be screened prior to entry and will be required to wear a procedure mask and eye protection (that they provide).
• Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols (including hand hygiene) will be conducted before and after each resident hair care.
• Residents will be escorted to the hair salon at the time of their appointment and back to their room following their appointment by unit staff

18. End of Life Care – Consideration will be given to the stage of illness, projection regarding timing of death and trajectory of expected decline. The decision related to when an individual is reaching their end of life will be informed by the care team and is unique to the circumstances of each individual. While difficult to be precise around when an individual is at end of life, this generally refers to the last two weeks of life.

References/ Adapted from:

Finding the Right Balance: An Evidence-Informed Guidance Document to Support the Re-Opening of Canadian Long-Term Care Homes to Family Caregivers and Visitors during the COVID-19 Pandemic
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c2fa7b03917eed9b5a436d8/t/5f0f2678f205304ab1e695be/1594828410565/%27NIA+LTC+Visitor+Guidance+Document.pdf

Better Together: Re-Integration of Family Caregivers as Essential Partners in Care in a Time of COVID-19
Appendix – Visitor Restrictions (Personal Care Homes)

Long Term Care Level: Red (Critical)
(Outbreak or High Level of COVID-19 Activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LTC Type of Visit</th>
<th>Visitors Recommended/Limited</th>
<th>Precautions/Restrictions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Service Providers (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP)</td>
<td>Only those services for client as determined by care team. Minimize external healthcare professionals.</td>
<td>Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Appropriate PPE for the setting/situation Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-essential Services (e.g. hairdresser)</td>
<td>Not permitted</td>
<td>Visits Suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Life (Indoor visit) – Last two weeks of life</td>
<td>Designated family caregiver(s) [Up to Two may be identified by resident/delegate] may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. Both may visit at the same time if physical distancing can be maintained. In addition, Up to ONE (1) general visitor may visit at a time in the resident’s room if physical distancing can be maintained. Visiting in an outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room (where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters) is acceptable.</td>
<td>By appointment for general visitors Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Visitors: Procedure mask (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions) Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces Visitors will keep procedure masks on for the duration of the visit and not eat/drink while in the facility Designated family caregivers: procedure mask and eye protection (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Family Caregivers</td>
<td>Designated family caregiver(s) may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific</td>
<td>Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry</td>
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*January 18, 2021   COVID-19 – LTC Resident Visitation Principles*
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<td>visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate but one (1) may visit at a time] in the resident’s room if physical distancing can be maintained. Visiting in an outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room (where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters) is acceptable.</td>
<td>Procedure mask and eye protection (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions) Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance If eating or drinking while in the facility, maintain a physical distance of six feet/two meters. Remove PPE carefully, including appropriate hand hygiene. After eating or drinking, perform hand hygiene and don mask and eye protection. Physical distancing of six feet, two meters must be maintained at any time PPE is removed.</td>
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| General Visitors (indoor/ outdoor) | Only One (1) general visitor is allowed to visit at a time and must occur in the all-season visitation shelter/designated indoor visitation room. Visits are not permitted in the resident room with the exception of those approved for end of life. | Visits must occur in the all-season visitation shelter/designated indoor visitation room Visits by pre-arranged appointment only Sign In and Out Screening Before Entry Both resident and general visitor must wear a procedure mask provided by the facility for the entire visit. Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance Must maintain the 6 feet/2 meter separation at all times – resident and visitor cannot touch |
**Personal Care Home Level:** Orange (Restricted)  
(Moderate Level of COVID-19 Activity)

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| Essential Service Providers, (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP) | Only those essential services for client as determined by care team. Minimize external healthcare professionals. | Sign In and Out  
Screening Before Entry  
Appropriate PPE for the setting/situation  
Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance |
| Non-essential Services (e.g. hairdresser) | Not permitted                  | Visits Suspended                                               |
| End of Life (Indoor visit) – Last two weeks of life | Designated family caregiver(s) [Up to **Two** may be identified by resident/delegate] may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/or as determined with the care team. Both may visit at same time if physical distancing can be maintained.  
In addition, Up to **Two** (2) general visitors may be permitted at a time in the resident’s room if physical distancing can be maintained. Visiting in an outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room (where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters) is acceptable. | By appointment for general visitors  
Sign In and Out  
Screening Before Entry  
Visitors: non-medical mask required (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions)  
Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance.  
General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces.  
Visitors will keep masks on for the duration of the visit and not eat/drink while in the facility.  
Designated family caregivers: Procedure mask and eye protection (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions). |
| Designated Family Caregivers             | Designated family caregiver(s) may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/or as determined with the care team. [Up to **Two** may be identified by resident/delegate but **one** (1) may visit at a time] in the resident’s room if physical | Sign in and Out  
Screening Before Entry  
Procedure mask and eye protection (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions)  
Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance |
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<td>distancing can be maintained. Visiting in an outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room (where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters) is acceptable.</td>
<td>If eating or drinking while in the facility, maintain a physical distance of six feet/two meters. Remove PPE carefully, including appropriate hand hygiene. After eating or drinking, perform hand hygiene and don mask and eye protection. Physical distancing of six feet, two meters must be maintained at any time PPE is removed</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Visitors - Indoor Visits</td>
<td>Not permitted.</td>
<td>Visits Suspended</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Visitors - Outdoor</td>
<td>Reasonable number of general visitors per resident may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained. Low risk activities for residents and families such as walks around the property/block may be considered. Visiting in outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room (where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters), is acceptable subject to space limitations and must be pre-booked.</td>
<td>By appointment or drop ins for general visitors (outdoors) as determined by site By appointment for general visitation in outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room Sign in and Out Screening Before Entry Non-medical mask strongly encouraged when outdoors but required if in visitation shelters or designated indoor visitation room. Visitors will keep masks on in that situation for the duration of the visit and not eat/drink while on the premises. Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance</td>
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Personal Care Home Level: Yellow (Caution)  
(Very Low Level of COVID-19 Activity)

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| Essential Service Providers (e.g. Spiritual Care, OT/PT, SLP) | Services as determined by care team including routine and chronic care provision | Sign In and Out  
Screening Before Entry  
Appropriate PPE for the setting/situation  
Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance |
| Non-essential Services (e.g. hairdresser) | Permitted – with precautions (hairdresser may not have a public business in a PCH and must work in a single PCH) | Screening before entry  
Required to wear a procedure mask and eye protection (recommended that they provide) so resident doesn’t need to wear a mask during hair care.  
Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting before and after each resident hair care  
Resident escorted to and from the appointment |
| End of Life (Indoor visit) – Last two weeks of life | Designated family caregiver(s) [Up to Two may be identified by resident/delegate] may visit anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/or as determined with the care team. Both may visit at same time if physical distancing can be maintained.  
In addition, reasonable number of general visitors may be permitted at a time if physical distancing can be maintained and there is no interference with the ability to provide care. Visiting in outdoor all-season shelter or designated indoor visitation room (where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters), where feasible, may allow for the accommodation of a higher number of general visitors safely. | By appointment for general visitors  
Sign In and Out  
Screening Before Entry  
Visitors: non-medical mask required  
Hand Hygiene and PH/IPC guidance  
General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces  
Visitors will keep masks on for the duration of the visit and not eat/drink while in the facility.  
Designated family caregivers: Procedure mask and eye protection (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions). |
<p>| Designated | Designated family caregiver(s) may visit | Sign In and Out |</p>
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| Family Caregivers       | anytime and for any length of time during specific visitation hours and/ or as determined with the care team. [Up to Two may be identified by resident/ delegate and both may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained] | Screening Before Entry  
Procedure mask and eye protection (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions)  
Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance  
If eating or drinking while in the facility, maintain a physical distance of six feet/two meters. Remove PPE carefully, including appropriate hand hygiene. After eating or drinking, perform hand hygiene and don mask and eye protection. Physical distancing of six feet, two meters must be maintained at any time PPE is removed. |
| General Visitors - Indoor Visits | Outdoor visits or visits in outdoor all-season shelters/designated indoor visitation rooms are preferred and encouraged to keep the number of individuals entering the facility and resident rooms to a minimum.  
However, sites may consider some visits from general visitors in resident’s room if the resident is in a single room; for double and multi-bedded rooms or for other reasons such as lack of outdoor all-season visitation shelters, an alternative indoor space must be identified where visitors can easily access the space from outside the personal care home and maintain the same public health requirements as the outdoor shelters. | By appointment for general visitors or as determined by the site  
Sign in and out  
Screening before entry  
Non-Medical mask (or additional PPE according to Additional Precautions)  
Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance  
General visitors escorted to/from visitation room, minimize touch surfaces  
No visitation with other residents  
Visitors will keep masks on for the duration of the visit and not eat/drink while in the facility. |
| Visitors - Outdoor      | Reasonable number of general visitors per resident may visit at a time if physical distancing can be maintained.  
Low risk activities for residents and families such as walks around the property/block may be considered. | By appointment or drop ins for general visitors as determined by site  
Sign in-and out  
Screening Before Entry  
Non-medical mask strongly encouraged when outdoors but required if in visitation shelters or |
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<td>designated indoor visitation room. Visitors will keep masks on in that situation for the duration of the visit and not eat/drink while on the premises. Hand Hygiene and PH/ IPC guidance</td>
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Change Tracker

**January 18, 2021**

1. Clarified wording around general visitors (pgs. 2 and 4).
2. Added visitors must wear a non-medical mask in levels green and orange, and a procedure mask in level red (pgs. 2, 4, and 6).

**January 6, 2021**

1. Updated guidance related to general visitation permitted during Pandemic Restriction Level Red. One (1) general visitor permitted to visit at a time. All visits must occur in the all-season visitation shelter/designated indoor visitation room.
2. General visitors are not permitted in the resident room, with the exception for those visits permitted for end of life.

**December 19, 2020**

1. Changes to required personal protective equipment to be worn by designated family caregivers.
   a. Facility to provide procedure mask and eye protection and to instruct designated family caregivers on appropriate wearing and use as well as ongoing importance of proper hand hygiene.
   b. If eating or drinking while in the facility, designated family caregivers are reminded to maintain a physical distance of six feet/two meters. Remove PPE carefully, including appropriate hand hygiene. After eating or drinking, perform hand hygiene and don mask and eye protection.

**Nov. 26, 2020**

1. Changes to visitor precautions (pgs. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
   - Visitors must follow regarding the need for visitors to wear a mask at all times during their visit.
   - General visitors are not permitted to eat or drink while in the facility.
   - Designated Family Care Givers must maintain physical distance of six feet/two metres if eating or drinking while in the facility, and must follow appropriate hand hygiene when donning and doffing PPE.
   - Masks are required while in visitation shelters.

**Nov. 1, 2020**

1. General Visitors – Outdoors – Updated to include general visitor information for facilities located in geographic regions designated Orange (Restricted). (pg. 9)
Oct. 14, 2020

1. Update – where outbreaks require the suspension of visits, resumption of visits will be collaboratively determined with Public Health. (pg. 2)
2. Consideration for Indoor Visits – added consideration for residents without family to designate as family caregivers. (pg. 3)
3. All-season visitation shelters and designated indoor visitation rooms – guidance added. (pg. 4).
   a. All season shelter/designated indoor visitation guidelines added to Appendix Charts and throughout document.
4. Non-essential service visits – updated in Red (Critical) and Orange (Restricted) to not permitted.