

## **VISITOR COVID-19 PROTOCOLS (ONTARIO LTC)**

The presence of family and friends is important to the emotional wellbeing of residents, and we recognize the importance of in-person visits. The health and safety of residents, families, team members, and visitors remains our top priority. The following protocols will support safe, equitable access, flexibility, equality, and opportunities for residents to have visitors to promote their overall wellbeing.

**What you need to know:** the chart below clarifies visitor definitions and highlights some key requirements in addition to protocols that are in place.

**Note:** Care communities in outbreak or located in areas of higher community spread of infections may be subject to additional visitor restrictions and per Public Health Unit direction.

Vaccination remains the best defence against COVID-19, and combined with other measures and actions, high vaccination rates can help prevent and limit the spread of this virus in long term care communities. All individuals entering our care communities are strongly encouraged to stay up to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses and obtain their COVID-19 booster doses when eligible. See the Government of Canada Vaccines for COVID-19 website: [Vaccines for COVID-19 - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/vaccines-and-biologics/covid-19-vaccines.html)

Effective March 14, 2022, all staff, support workers, student placements, volunteers, caregivers, and general visitors are required to have at least 2 doses of approved COVID-19 vaccines to enter our care communities. In circumstances, where a resident's physical and psychological wellbeing may be impacted, visits by unvaccinated visitors may be accommodated in consultation with the Executive Director and Infection Prevention Control Lead for compassionate reasons. Additional infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures may be required to allow entry of an unvaccinated visitor to the care community,

**Non-compliance with the care community's visiting policy and guidelines could result in discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor. Where the care community has previously ended a visit, or temporarily prohibited a visitor, additional education/training must be provided to the visitor before visitation can be resumed. If a caregiver is temporarily prohibited, the resident/substitute decision maker may designate an alternative individual as the caregiver to help meet resident care needs.**

### **Visitor Requirements**

COVID-19 testing/screening process to be followed by visitors:

- Complete the active screening questionnaire upon entry at each visit to the care community.
- **In non-outbreak conditions**, undergo mandatory screening for COVID-19 using a rapid antigen test prior to visiting with a resident as per COVID-19 Guidance: Considerations for Rapid Antigen Point-of-Care Screening, at the frequencies as specified in the current directives.
  - All visitors are required to undergo rapid antigen testing as outlined in the current directives.
- **In outbreak conditions**, essential caregivers are required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test result conducted within 7 days prior to the visit/negative rapid test upon entry to the care

community and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive or undergo surveillance testing as directed by local PHU.

- For the safety of residents and team members, any visitor who is on self-isolation, awaiting COVID-19 test results, or is positive for COVID-19 and not cleared by Public Health will not be permitted to visit.
- An individual who has previously had laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 AND was cleared should generally not be re-tested before 90 days unless there are clinical indications that are determined by their physician or advised by public health. Previously positive individuals should provide proof of clearance from Public Health prior to resuming the visits.
- Individuals who have travelled outside of Canada, including the USA, and are required to undergo rapid testing for 14 days from date of return regardless of vaccination status.
- Must practice physical distancing with other residents whom they are not visiting and with team members.
- Can participate in recreation activities, both indoor and outdoor, unless otherwise directed by Public Health. Caregivers and general visitors may accompany a resident for meals to assist a resident with eating; however, the visitor should remain masked at all times while in the care community and not eat with the resident
- Must adhere to personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements in place at the care community.
- Mask are not required for outdoor visits, but are encouraged
- Mask are required for indoor visits upon entry to the care community and for the entire duration of the visit

### Visitor Types and Requirements

Visitor Type	Category	Definition	Requirements
Essential Visitors	Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated in writing by the resident/substitute decision maker</li> <li>• Can be a friend/family member or person of importance</li> <li>• Provide one or more forms of support or assistance to meet resident care needs including providing direct physical support e.g. activities of daily living, social, spiritual or emotional support, whether the individual is paid or unpaid</li> <li>• Must be 16 years of age or older</li> <li>• The approval of a parent or legal guardian is required to permit individuals under the age of 16 years to be designated as a caregiver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergo rapid antigen screening and PCR testing at frequencies set out by the care community.</li> <li>• Fully immunized and participate in rapid antigen testing</li> <li>• # of visitors: 4 at one time (includes caregivers and general visitors when the care community is not in outbreak.</li> <li>• Care community wide outbreak: 1 per resident maximum at a time. If only a portion of the care community is in outbreak, residents who are in an area of the care community that is not part of the outbreak area may receive visitors.</li> <li>• No limit on the number of visitors outdoors</li> <li>• Caregivers who were designated prior to December 15, 2021, may continue to be designated as a</li> </ul>

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<b>Essential Visitors</b>			<p>caregiver even if this means the resident has more than four designated caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional IPAC training &amp; education required prior to visit</li> <li>• Should not visit any other long term care home for 10 days after visiting another resident who is self-isolating including those experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are being assessed and if a home or area of a home is affected by an outbreak</li> <li>• Caregiver designated can be changed based on resident care needs</li> <li>• IPAC education required prior to first visit</li> <li>• PPE – mask required when indoors. Additional PPE required based on isolation precautions and point of care risk assessment (non-outbreak).</li> </ul>
	<b>Support Workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergo rapid antigen screening and PCR testing at frequencies set out by the care community</li> <li>• Must undergo COVID-19 screening for typical and atypical symptoms</li> <li>• Scheduling not required</li> <li>• Location of visit can be designated by site</li> <li>• No limit on the number of visitors</li> </ul>
	<b>Compassionate Reasons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person visiting the very ill for compassionate reasons including but not limited to hospice services or end of life care</li> <li>• Other risks related to the resident physical and psychological wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergo screening</li> <li>• Proof of negative COVID-19 test and vaccine requirements not required.</li> <li>• No restrictions on number of visitors</li> <li>• Risk mitigation methods will be reviewed and approved by the ED on a case by case basis in consultation with IPAC</li> </ul>
	<b>Government Inspector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With a statutory right to enter a long term care home to carry out their duties.</li> </ul>	
<b>Other Visitors</b>	<b>General visitors</b>	<p>Provides non-essential services or visits for social reasons.</p> <p>Individuals providing personal care services such as hairdressing, barbers, manicurist,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General visitors including those 5 years or younger are excluded from Sienna vaccine policy requirements</li> <li>• General visitors under the age of 14 years must be accompanied by an adult and must follow all applicable</li> </ul>

Visitor Type	Category	Definition	Requirements
Other Visitors		<p>entertainers, recreational handlers as part of animal program, people entering for tours.</p> <p>Infants under the age of 1 are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing and vaccination requirements.</p>	<p>public health measures that are in place at the care community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total # of visitors: 4 at a time (includes caregivers and general visitors)</li> <li>• No limit on number of visitors outdoors</li> <li>• Must undergo COVID-19 screening for typical and atypical symptoms</li> <li>• For indoor visits, undergo rapid antigen screening testing at frequencies set out by the care community (non-outbreak) or provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result conducted within the past 7 days (outbreak)</li> <li>• Not permitted to visit during a care community wide outbreak.</li> <li>• Only permitted if RHA/unit is not part of the outbreak &amp; resident is not currently symptomatic/on isolation</li> <li>• Coordinate the initial visitor with the care community designate to review visitor policy and procedures and training resources prior to the indoor visit.</li> </ul>

**Additional Visitor Information**

- All individuals 2 years of age and older will align with indoor masking requirement and additional PPE requirements as required by Public Health when visiting.
- The resident/Substitute Decision Maker will determine who may visit.
- Outdoor visits will be permitted only when the care community is not in an outbreak, where the resident is asymptomatic and not self-isolating.
- Visits will be accommodated outdoors and as weather permits.
- Designated Caregivers who want to volunteer to support more than one resident during outbreak (caring for COVID-19 positive residents) and non-outbreak situations provided the care community obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers).
- A visitor acknowledgement form must be signed upon each visit to certify that visitation attestation requirements have been met, with education completed prior to the initial visit and then as specified by the care community.
- Visits will be accommodated in designated areas within the care community as per ED and IPAC Lead direction.
- All designated caregivers and general visitors will receive education on the care community’s infection prevention and control measures, including hand hygiene and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to the initial visit, during an outbreak, and at any other times set out by the care community.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) mask must be worn appropriately during the visits as required. Additional PPE may be required by designated caregivers based on point of care risk assessment.
- Visitors are not required to adhere to physical distancing measures with the resident they are visiting.
- Animals may accompany visitors during a visit upon approval by the care community Executive Director/designate (note, service dogs will always be permitted and do not require approval).
- Staff members will be available to escort visitors to the designated visiting location as required.
- Visitors must adhere to a safe physical distance of six feet from other residents and staff during the visit.

**Additional considerations for outdoor visits:**

- Visitor will proceed to the screening area to undergo screening before proceeding to the outdoor visiting space.
- Visitor will receive education on infection prevention and control measures (5 to 10 minutes) from the screener/designate.
- If weather permits, visitor will be directed to the designated meeting area to visit with their loved one.
- Visits may be facilitated by a team member to ensure the visiting guidelines are being adhered to while respecting privacy of the visitor and resident.
- Team member will escort visitor from the designated meeting area at the end of the visit.

**Visitors please review the following education and training resources prior to your visit.**

- Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
- Video link: Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>
- Video link: Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
- Video link: How to Wash Your Hands  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>

**Additional References:**

[COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario | ontario.ca](#)

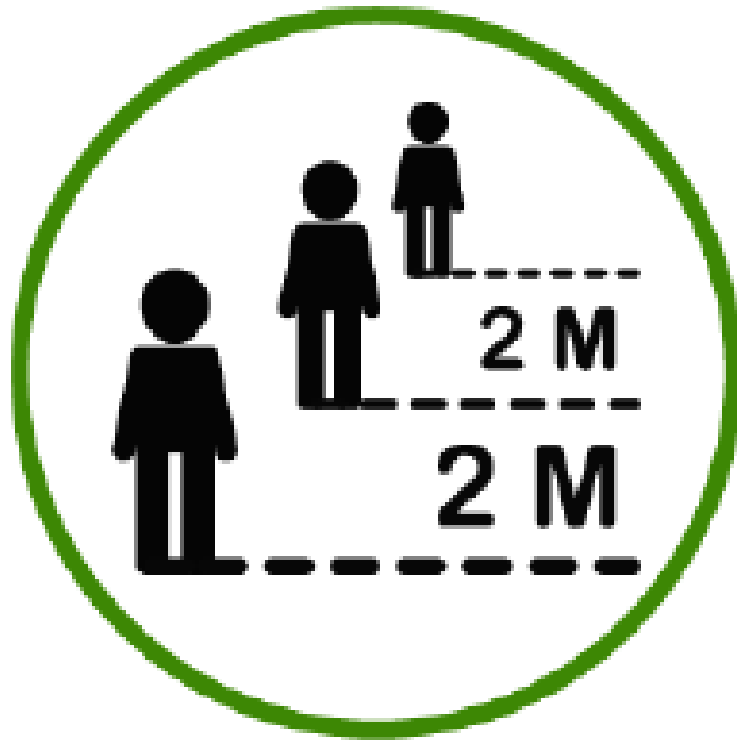
COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes available at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-long-term-care-home-surveillance-testing>

Ministry of Long Term Care: Directive #3, COVID-19 Guidance Document for LTCHs, and Rapid Testing Merged FAQs, May 13, 2022

Training Posters

Physical Distancing:



Maintain physical distancing between all others, including other residents, team members, and other visitors.

Donning and Doffing PPE:

- Place mask over nose and under chin
- Secure ties, loops or straps
- Mould metal piece to your nose bridge
- For respirators, perform a seal-check



**Hand Hygiene:**

To clean hands properly, rub all parts of the hands and wrists with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Pay special attention to fingertips, between fingers, backs of hands and base of the thumbs.

