

SECTION7	SUBJECT	POLICY #		
APPROVED BY: VP OF QUALITY AND CLINICAL SERVICES	VISITORS POLICY LONG TERM CARE HOMES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC	INF 07-02-02		
COVID-19 MANAGEMENT		YY	MM	DD
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POLICY

The home has established and implement a written visitor policy as required under Ontario Regulation 246/22 made under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (s. 267. (1) and Directive #3. This policy is periodically updated to meet requirements of all applicable legislation.

HIGHLIGHT OF CHANGES (AS OF April 8, 2022, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED)

(Sourced from COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario see link within References)

In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care (“the Ministry”) is providing updates in its continued response to COVID-19, while striking a balance between reduced COVID-19 risk and the overall quality of life, health and wellbeing of residents. Effective April 11th, the changes are as follows:

- Testing and isolation requirements for day and overnight absences have been updated. There are no isolation requirements unless a positive test result is received or the individual is symptomatic; or the resident has a known exposure to a case or symptomatic person while on their absence. A PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test is required on day 5 after return from absence.
- Cohorting practices, including for staff, are no longer required, unless the home is in outbreak.
- Removing physical distancing requirements between staff and clients of Adult Day Programs that take place on the site of a long-term care home.
- Clarifying that homes’ vaccination policies should not apply to outdoor visitors and children under 5 years old.
- Updates throughout to reflect the coming into force of the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (“the Act”) and the associated regulation (O. Reg. 246/22).
- The definition of fully vaccinated has been changed to staying up-to-date with vaccines, per the Ministry of Health’s Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines: Recommended Doses.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19, primarily spreads from one person to another when an infected person breathes, talks, coughs, or sneezes and releases respiratory emissions of different sized virus-laden particles into the air.

There is not one specific measure that will prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission. However, the use of multiple layers of prevention provides the best protection, especially when people cannot avoid closed spaces, crowded places, and close contact.

PROCEDURE

This policy is effective April 11, 2022. All previous versions of the visiting policy are revoked and replaced with this version.

DEFINITION FOR FULLY VACCINATED: The ‘fully vaccinated’ definition continues to be used in Long-Term Care, and relevant policies, legislation, directives or orders must continue to be followed where applicable.

An individual is considered **fully vaccinated** in Ontario, as defined on the Proof of COVID-19 vaccination website. For these purposes, “fully vaccinated” may be defined as someone having received:

- The full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines, or one dose of Janssen, or
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or

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- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada; and
- They received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before providing the proof of being fully vaccinated

(See Proof of Vaccination <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/proof-covid-19-vaccination#proof-of-vaccination>)

To find out what vaccines are authorised by Health Canada visit “Approved COVID-19 Vaccines” site:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines.html>

VISITORS’ ACCESS TO THE HOME’S VISITOR POLICY

1. The Long Term Care Home must provide:

- a. A Copy of Visitors Policy must be provided to Residents’ Council and Family Council (if any)
- b. A Copy of Visitors Policy must be included with Resident Information Package

2. The Long Term Care Home must

- **Post** Visitors Policy in the Home for easy accesses
- **Communicate** Visitors Policy to residents, families and staff
- **Post** Visitors Policy on LTC home’s website

COVID-19 VACCINATION

The goal of the provincial COVID-19 immunization program is to protect Ontarians from COVID-19. Vaccines minimize the risk of severe outcomes, including hospitalizations and death, due to COVID-19, and may help reduce the number of new cases. The Ministry is taking a guidance-based approach that supports licensees with their employer led policies and to promotes best practices.

Vaccination policy does not apply to outdoor visitors and to visitors under the age of 5 (who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated).

Provision of fourth doses to long-term care residents

People That are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised aged 12 and older that received a 3-dose primary series are recommended to receive a booster (fourth) dose to be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines (Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines: Recommended Doses).

Based on recommendations from the Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee, residents of Long-Term Care Homes are eligible for a fourth dose of an mRNA vaccine if at least three months have passed since their third dose:

- Any mRNA vaccine product is acceptable as a fourth dose, although data suggest that the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine may provide a more robust immune response.
- Residents are encouraged to receive their fourth dose. (see Vaccination Policy)

REQUIREMENTS

THIS VISITING POLICY IS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- **Safety** – any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated
- **Emotional well-being** – welcoming visitors is intended to support the mental and emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation
- **Equitable access** – all residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents

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- **Flexibility** – the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce/human resources availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to consider when setting home-specific policies
- **Equality** – residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers

DEFINITIONS OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VISITORS

Not considered visitors:

Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers, and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Infants under the age of 1 are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing and vaccination requirements.

Essential visitors

Essential visitors are persons visiting a home to meet an essential need related to the residents or the operations of the home that could not be adequately met if the person does not visit the home.

There are no limits on the number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of a home or when a resident has failed screening, is symptomatic or in isolation.

Table Visitors Type: As per O. Reg. 246/22 under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, there are four types of essential visitors:

There are four types of essential visitors:	
People visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care	
Government inspectors with a statutory right of entry	Government inspectors with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.
Support workers	Support workers are persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents
	Example of Services Provided by Support Workers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment, diagnostic, intervention/rehabilitation, and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive Devices Program vendors -- for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving a resident in or out of a home
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social work services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-mortem services • Emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and the functionality of the home's operational systems such as Heating, Cooling and Ventilation (HVAC), mechanical, electrical, plumbing and telecommunication systems, and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance, including septic and well water system maintenance Food/nutrition and water/drink delivery Canada Post mail services and other courier services Election officials/workers
Caregiver	<p>A caregiver is a type of essential visitor who as defined under section 4 of O. Reg. 246/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident, (b) is able to comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the <i>Health Protection and Promotion Act</i>, (c) provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis, <p>REQUIREMENT TO DESIGNATE CAREGIVERS (section 4 of O. Reg. 246/22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (d) is designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and (e) in the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.
Caregivers – scheduling and length and frequency of visits	<p>NOT - OUTBREAK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling visits is not required for Caregivers Caregivers may support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers).
Examples of direct care provided by caregivers include but are not limited to the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating assistance Providing cognitive stimulation Fostering successful communication Providing meaningful connection and emotional support Offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making
General visitors:	
<p>A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.</p> <p>The Homes should prioritize the mental and emotional well-being of residents and strive to be as accommodating as possible when scheduling visits with general visitors.</p>	

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Table ACCESS TO HOMES

<p>ALL VISITORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to four (4) visitors (including caregivers) per resident may visit at a time for indoor visits. There are no sector limits on the number of visitors permitted at outdoor visits, and homes can return to their regular practices on use of their available outdoor spaces. 2 meters (6 feet) physical distance must be maintained between groups Direction from the local public health unit: In the case where a local public health unit directs a home in respect of the number of visitors allowed, the home must follow the direction of the local public health unit. 	
Essential Visitors	Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating or resides in a home or area of the home in an outbreak.
Caregivers	<p>OUTBREAK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the home is in outbreak, resident is symptomatic or isolating under additional precautions, only one (1) caregiver may visit at a time. A caregiver should not visit any other home for 10 days after visiting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 an individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms Caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers).
General Visitors	General visitors are not permitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a Home or area of a home is in outbreak To visit an isolating resident When the local public health unit so directs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All general visitors, including children under the age of 5, can enter the long-term care home not in outbreak General visitors, with the exception of the children under the age of 5, will need to follow the vaccination policy of the individual long-term care home.
Outdoor Visits	The Home will not restrict visitors from outdoor visits based on vaccination status.
	There are no sector limits on the number of visitors permitted at outdoor visits, and homes can return to their regular practices on use of their available outdoor spaces.
	Recognizing that not all homes have suitable outdoor space, outdoor visits may also take place in the general vicinity of the home.

REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO ACTIVE SCREENING AND SURVEILLANCE TESTING OF VISITORS

The Home implements measures related to Active Screening and Surveillance Testing of visitors consistent with all applicable Government of Ontario legislation and recommendations.

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Active Screening:

All staff, students, volunteers, support workers, visitors, caregivers and residents regardless of vaccination status, must be actively screened for COVID-19 upon entry of the Long-Term Care Home.

All residents must be actively screened for COVID-19 once per day using Resident's Screening electronic User Defined assessment in Point Click Care for residents' active screening. During COVID-19 exposure, surveillance or outbreak, residents' Active Screening may increase to twice per day.

Surveillance Testing:

At a minimum, all staff, students, volunteers, support workers, visitors and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested in accordance with the Minister's Directive. Refer directly to the Minister of Long-Term Care's Directive COVID-19: Long-term care home surveillance testing and access to homes for requirements related to surveillance testing (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-long-term-care-home-surveillance-testing>).

At a minimum, all staff, students, volunteers, support workers, visitors and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested in accordance with the Minister's Directive. (See Surveillance Testing Policy).

VISITORS LOGS OF ALL VISITS TO THE HOME

In accordance with section 267(2) of O. Reg. 246/22 and Directive #3, homes must maintain visitor logs of all visits to the home for a period of at least 30 days and be readily available to the local public health unit for contact tracing purposes upon request

Per Directive #3, homes must maintain visitor logs of all visits to the home. For this purpose, the Home uses the "Visitors' Active Screening Record" that includes:

- the name and contact information of the visitor
- time and date of the visit
- the purpose of the visit (for example, name of resident visited)

EDUCATION/TRAINING TO ALL VISITORS ABOUT PHYSICAL DISTANCING, RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE, HAND HYGIENE, IPAC PRACTICES, AND PROPER USE OF PPE

The training education include guidance from the following Public Health Ontario resources to support IPAC and PPE education and training (<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/long-term-care-resources>):

- guidance document: recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
- video: putting on full personal protective equipment <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>

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- video: taking off full personal protective equipment
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
- videos how to hand wash <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>
- video how to hand rub <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub>
- 2 meters physical Distancing video <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-physical-distancing.html>

Documentation:

- Designated staff will document the training provided
- Caregiver confirms by signing in the respective section on “LTC Visitors & Caregivers Education” form

Table: Visitors Training Guide	Essential Caregiver	General Visitor	Frequency
Guidance document: recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled <u>putting on full personal protective equipment</u> ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled <u>Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment.</u> ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled <u>How to Hand Wash.</u> ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Video entitled <u>How to Hand Rub</u> ** https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit
	X		Every 6 Months
Physical Distancing Video ((eastern Ontario Health Unit) https://eohu.ca/en/covid/social-distancing)	X	X	Prior to 1 st visit and as necessary for re-education
Feeding the resident Video ** (as per Essential Visitors-Caregivers Request Form) https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7cobf8y2wuuopbi/AABvKzn1uPsWnQNoGsN_nTeDa?dl=0	X		Prior to 1 st visit (if applicable)
**Retraining must be provided with each observed noncompliance and based on auditing outcome(s) Public Health Ontario resources to support IPAC and PPE education and training (https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/long-term-care-resources)			

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PROVISIONS REGARDING HOME'S IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL REQUIRED PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL PRACTICES (IPAC)

The importance of ongoing adherence to strong and consistent IPAC processes and practices cannot be overstated. The home strives to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring that strong and consistent IPAC practices are implemented and continuously reviewed. Appropriate and effective IPAC practices must be carried out by all people attending or living in the home, at all times, regardless of whether there are cases of COVID-19 in the home or not, and regardless of the vaccination status of an individual.

IPAC audits

- The Home meets Directive #3 by completing IPAC audits at least every two weeks unless in outbreak.
- When the Home is in outbreak the IPAC audits are completed at least weekly.
- IPAC audits are rotated across shifts, including weekends.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing Consistent with Directive #3, homes must ensure that physical distancing (a minimum of 2 metres or 6 feet) is practiced by all individuals at all times, except for the purposes of providing direct care to a resident or when the following additional exceptions apply:

- for residents to have brief physical contact with their visitors, regardless of visitors' immunization status
- between residents either one on one or in small group settings
- between fully vaccinated visitors and fully vaccinated residents
- for the purposes of a compassionate/palliative visit
- during the provision of personal care services (for example, haircutting).
- personal care services (for example, haircutting) must be in accordance with all applicable laws including regulations under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020

UNIVERSAL MASKING AND EYE PROTECTION

1. **All staff and essential visitors** wear a medical mask for the entire duration of their shift/visit, both indoors (including in the residents' room) and outdoors, regardless of their immunization status.
2. **All staff and visitors** wear eye protection when in the Home (indoors and outdoors)

Exceptions to the masking requirements are:

- children who are younger than two years of age
- any individual (staff, visitor, or resident) who is being accommodated in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 or the Ontario Human Rights Code
- if the entertainment provided by a live performer (that is, a general visitor) requires the removal of their mask to perform their talent, provided the performance is in accordance with all applicable laws including regulations under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020.

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ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Homes are required to meet all applicable laws such as the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

Where the accessibility considerations apply to a Support Person, the Support Person will be allowed to enter the Home with the visitor.

REFERENCES:

- **Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021** <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>
- **Regulations under the Act: O. Reg. 246/22** <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>
- **COVID-19 Guidance document for long term care homes in Ontario**
<https://ltchomes.net/LTCHPORTAL/Content/LTC%20Guidance%20Document%202022.04.08%20FINAL.pdf>
- **Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines: Recommended Doses**
https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID_19_vaccine_up_to_date.pdf
- **Proof of Vaccination** <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/proof-covid-19-vaccination#proof-of-vaccination>
- **Approved COVID-19 Vaccines** <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines.html>
- **Directive #3, COVID-19 Guidance Document for LTCHs, and Rapid Testing Merged FAQs**
<https://ltchomes.net/LTCHPORTAL/Content/Pandemic%20Response%20FAQs%202022-04-08%20FINAL.pdf>
- **Public Health Ontario** <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/variants>

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COVID-19 Policies: What Residents Can Expect in a Long-Term Care Home

(As of April 11th, 2022 unless otherwise specified)



All residents may*...

- Enjoy the company of general visitors, consistent with the individual home's vaccination policy
- Have up to four visitors (including caregivers) at a time indoors, consistent with the individual home's vaccination policy.
- Enjoy outdoor visits, with the number of visitors based on the home's policy.
- Participate in group social activities, including games, clubs and exercises.
- Have meals in the dining room, including buffet and family-style meals.
- Leave the home for all types of absences, including social day and overnight absences.

*Unless otherwise directed by the local public health unit or when isolating

What temporary measures are in place to safeguard long-term care homes?

- All staff, students, volunteers, caregivers, support workers and general visitors must be screened and wear masks, whether inside or outside. Those visiting indoors must also be tested.
- Continued infection prevention and control measures will be followed, including distancing between groups and dining tables, masking, hand washing and enhanced cleaning.

What if the home is in outbreak?

Residents can expect the following if the area of the home they live in is in outbreak*:

- Group activities, dining and social gatherings may continue in non-outbreak areas if residents can follow public health measures.
- For outbreak areas of a home, residents will be cohorted in small groups for all essential activities. Group activities for cohorts may continue/resume if operationally feasible.
- Communal dining, non-essential activities and personal care services will be suspended or modified.
- Caregivers can still visit.

*Unless otherwise directed by the local public health unit

[https://ltchomes.net/LTCHPORTAL/Content/What%20residents%20can%20expect%20in%20a%20Long-Term%20Care%20Home%20FINAL%202022.04.08%20\(EN\).pdf](https://ltchomes.net/LTCHPORTAL/Content/What%20residents%20can%20expect%20in%20a%20Long-Term%20Care%20Home%20FINAL%202022.04.08%20(EN).pdf)