



The Regional
Municipality
of Durham

Social Services
Department

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Dear Family Member,

Region of Durham Long-Term Care COVID-19 Update

The Ministry has released information on further changes to visitor and absence policies taking effect on June 9th to improve the quality of life for long-term care residents.

Absences

- Social and temporary absences for residents who are fully immunized will be permitted. The resident will be provided with a medical mask to be worn (as tolerated) and reminded to follow public health measures while away from the home. Social absences are absences that are less than or equal to 24 hours in duration. Testing or self-isolation of residents is not required upon return. Temporary absences include absences involving two or more days and one or more nights for non-medical reasons. Residents will need to seek approval from the home to go out on temporary absences, and homes will accommodate these requests wherever operationally feasible.

Visiting

- *General visitors permitted indoors under exceptional circumstances.* Where a resident has mobility limitations or health conditions (i.e. factors unrelated to weather) that makes an outdoor visit highly unlikely or impossible, a maximum of 1 general visitor per resident may visit indoors at a time. A maximum of 1 essential caregiver may also be present during the visit. In this situation, general visitors shall be permitted indoors regardless of their immunization status and must adhere to physical distancing (unless otherwise permitted), PPE and other IPAC measures the homes have in place; and must be actively screened and undergo rapid antigen testing.
- General visitors are not permitted to visit a resident indoors if the entire home is in outbreak or the resident is symptomatic or isolating under Droplet and Contact precautions. If only a portion of the home is in outbreak, residents who are unable to participate in an outdoor visit and who are unaffected by that outbreak may receive a maximum of 1 general visitor, in addition to 1 caregiver.
- General visitors are not permitted to visit residents outdoors if the resident is symptomatic or isolating under Droplet and Contact precautions.
- *Screening and surveillance testing requirements for general visitors* – General visitors must undergo active screening upon arrival at the home. For outdoor visits, general visitors are not allowed beyond entry points / areas in homes and do not need to undergo rapid antigen tests as their visit will be outdoors. For indoor visits, general

visitors are subject to antigen testing and must test negative for COVID-19 prior to being granted entry to the home. General visitors must wait for a negative antigen test result before proceeding beyond entry points / areas in homes.

- *Brief hugs permitted regardless of immunization status* – Physical distance of two metres must be maintained between general visitors and residents, however effective June 9, brief hugs are permitted between all residents and visitors regardless of immunization status. Where both the resident and visitor are fully immunized, close physical contact, including handholding, is permitted.
- *Eye protection for visitors* – Essential caregivers and general visitors are required to wear eye protection if the visit takes place indoors.

If you have a specific question about visiting, don't hesitate to reach out to the home directly.

Surveillance Testing

In line with the updated *MOH Guidance Document*, individuals who have previously been diagnosed and cleared of a COVID-19 infection will now be required to resume asymptomatic screening testing after 90 days from their COVID-19 infection (based on the date of their positive result).

Father's Day

Father's Day is fast approaching. Staff are working on plans to make this day as special as it can be for all the fathers. We will be sending out information to you about how to drop off cards or gifts. If you or anyone in the family wishes to send a e-card to a loved one, please go to www.durham.ca/LTCUpdates and click on "send a greeting care to your loved one in LTC" to personalize your message and we will make sure it is delivered.

Vaccinations

If you are an essential caregiver and have not yet been vaccinated. please consider doing so as the vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting COVID-19. Please book your first dose vaccine clinic appointment directly through the applicable online portal or the call-in line. For Durham Region clinics, the portal link is www.durham.ca/vaccineappointment and the call-in number is 1-888-444-5113.

Visit <https://www.durham.ca/CovidVaccines> for the latest information on current priority groups eligible to receive a vaccine in Durham Region.

Summary

Although some restrictions are loosening in our homes, it is important that residents and visitors continue to adhere to public health measures in the home, including good hand hygiene and appropriate masking.

If you have any questions about any policies or procedures in the home, don't hesitate to reach out to me or to a member of the management team at the LTC home.

Laura MacDermaid