



The Regional
Municipality
of Durham

Department of
Social Services

Long Term Care &
Services for Seniors
Division

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Frequently Asked Questions

(Information is taken from the MLTC Updated Directive #3 and Guidance document issued June 3, 2021)

Vaccination Thresholds

What is meant by “fully immunized” in Directive #3 and referenced in the MLTC guidance document?

A person is fully immunized against COVID-19 if:

- they have received the total required number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g., both doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series); and
- they received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago. Currently, the required number of doses for the Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca vaccines to complete the vaccine series is two.

What are “immunization coverage rates/thresholds”?

For the purposes of interpreting the new MLTC guidance document, immunization coverage rates refer to the percentage of residents who are fully immunized and the percentage of employees of the long-term care licensee who are fully immunized. The level of precautions homes must implement for communal dining and social activities depends on whether they have immunization coverage rates of 85% of residents and 70% of employees fully immunized.

What does this mean for the Region of Durham Homes?

Currently Hillsdale Terraces and Lakeview Manor have reached the 85% resident and 70% staff vaccination threshold. This means that residents can enjoy communal dining with no barriers on the tables and **fully immunized** essential caregivers can enter the dining room to be with their loved ones only. Essential Caregivers must continue to mask, wear eye protection and physical distance from

other residents and staff. Essential Caregivers are not able to consume food or drink while visiting.

This also means that social activities can resume, and physical distancing can be suspended for the duration of the activity/social gathering.

For homes that have **not yet** met this threshold, the following continues to apply for social gatherings:

- Cohorting
- Masking, including for residents where possible/tolerated
- Avoiding high risk activities (e.g., singing)
- Limited capacity in a room to allow physical distancing
- All participants should physically distance from one another unless staff are providing direct support

Absences

Are social absences permitted?

Yes, as of June 9, 2021, residents who are **fully immunized** can leave the home for social absences, which includes absences for all reasons not listed under medical, compassionate/palliative, and/or essential absences that do not include an overnight stay.

Do residents have to request approval from the home to go out for a short term (day) absence.

No. Residents DO NOT need to seek approval from the home to go out on a short-term absence. However, it is important to let the nurse know that the resident is going out and when they expect to return.

Are temporary absences permitted?

Yes, as of June 9, 2021, residents who are **fully immunized** may leave the home for temporary absences, which includes absences that involve two or more days and one or more nights for non-medical reasons. As per Directive 3, residents who leave the home for on an overnight absence are required to have a laboratory-

based PCR COVID-19 test upon return and remain in isolation on Droplet and Contact precautions while their test result is pending.

Do residents have to request approval from the home to go out for a temporary absence?

Residents who are **fully immunized** will need to seek approval from the home to go out on temporary absences. Homes are asked to accommodate these requests wherever operationally feasible, taking into account the safety of the resident.

Why are you only allowing fully immunized residents to go on short term and temporary absences?

The ministry has not mandated immunization for any residents, staff or caregivers and aims to provide all individuals, regardless of immunization status, the ability to socialize with loved ones. We are taking a cautious approach to modifying restrictions in homes June 3, 2021 Ministry of Long-Term Care Page 7 of 15 based on an assessment of risk factors, including immunization status. As the pandemic continues to evolve public health conditions improve, we anticipate making additional changes to further ease restrictions including for both vaccinated and unvaccinated residents.

Can residents participate in physical activity such as walks in the immediate area?

It is important for residents to be able to engage in physical activity and take part in activities that bring them joy, comfort, and dignity while remaining safe. Residents who are not under isolation requirements or symptomatic can leave the home to take a walk in the immediate area to support overall physical and mental well-being, including during the stay-at-home order and even if the home is in outbreak.

What protocols should continue to be followed by homes when residents are leaving to go out for an absence?

Homes must provide residents with a surgical/procedure mask and remind residents to comply with routine public health measures, including masking (as tolerated), physical distancing, frequent hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette. Residents should maintain their distance from others (unless they require assistance/direct care) while they are out.

Do residents need to be screened upon return from an absence?

Yes. Returning residents must be actively screened for symptoms and exposure history for COVID-19 before they can enter the LTCH. Any resident returning to the LTCH following an absence who fails active screening must be permitted entry but isolated under Droplet and Contact Precautions and tested for COVID-19 as per the COVID-19: Provincial Testing Requirements Update. As per Directive 3, residents who leave the home for on an overnight absence are required to have a laboratory-based PCR COVID-19 test upon return and remain in isolation on Droplet and Contact precautions while their test result is pending.

What does this mean for Region of Durham Homes?

All four Region of Durham homes are aligned with the updated Directive #3 and Guidance documents allowing for resident absences as noted above. Please remember to request approval for a temporary absence as per each individual home's process.