

# Updates for residents and families in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities

Issue 7 – September 3, 2020

To keep you informed about the changing information about COVID-19, we'll be preparing this update for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities every two weeks.

## Bringing food and drinks to family members

Family members are now able to bring food and drinks into facilities for their loved ones as long as they follow the Bringing Food to Families:

[https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/bringing-food-to-family.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/bringing-food-to-family.pdf)

Some home-made and store-bought treats and meals are safe to bring into a health care facility, but others present a risk and require care and attention. It is important that the food you bring in doesn't:

- Increase the risk of food poisoning
- Conflict with special diet considerations (e.g. allergies, celiac, diabetes, etc.)
- Increase the risk of choking hazard (e.g. swallowing difficulties)

It's important that the designated visitor DOES NOT share food during visits. Family members should check with their facility prior to bringing in any food.

## Clarification to Visiting Guidelines

The Ministry of Health, working with the provincial health officer, has developed guidelines to support visits between family members and residents of long-term care homes and seniors' assisted living facilities. Under these guidelines for social visits, residents can visit with **one designated** family member or friend. The facility manager can approve a change to the designated visitor under extenuating circumstances; for example, if the visitor moves away or becomes ill and is unable to visit. Designated visitors cannot be alternated or changed if the designated visitor is on vacation.

### For all visitors:

- You will be screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, and possible exposure to COVID-19, prior to every visit.
- You will need to bring a mask and wear it for the duration of your visit.
- Please practice hand and respiratory hygiene (cough/sneeze etiquette), and maintain two-metres of physical distance where possible.

**If you're an essential visitor:** You may not need to schedule your visit in advance. If there's another family member or friend providing essential care, only one visitor is allowed at a time (except for palliative and end-of-life care, where more than one visitor may be allowed at a time).

**If you're visiting for social reasons,** you need to

- Book your visit with facility staff in advance,
- Socialize in designated areas identified by facility staff, and
- Keep in mind visits aren't allowed if there's an active COVID-19 outbreak at the residence.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need help with the facility's safety procedures, please contact the number listed on the poster at the main entrance(s) of the facility.

## Survey about the impact of visiting restrictions in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities

To ensure that seniors in long-term care homes (LTC) and assisted living facilities (AL) were protected as much as possible from COVID-19, it was necessary to restrict who could visit. This restriction of visitors, which has evolved along with the pandemic, has had a profound effect on those who are living in LTC and AL and their loved ones.

To better understand the depth and breadth of experiences over the past six months it's important we hear from as many residents and their family members as possible. You have an important voice and a unique story to tell.

To ensure your voices are heard, the Office of the Seniors Advocate British Columbia has launched a survey to capture your experience. The survey is open until September 30, 2020 and there are several ways for you to participate. We encourage you to complete the survey online if possible at [www.carehomevisits.ca](http://www.carehomevisits.ca), but if you're not comfortable doing this there are several other options:

- A copy can be downloaded from [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca](http://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca) and can be mailed to the address on the website or you can phone **1-877-952-3181** and we'll mail a copy to you with a stamped return envelope.
- If you'd like to complete the survey by telephone with the help of a trained volunteer you can phone **1-877-952-3181** and a volunteer will contact you to arrange a convenient time for you to complete the survey.
- If you'd like to complete the survey in a language other than English, you (or your family member or friend) can phone **1-877-952-3181** and a translator will phone you at a time convenient for you.

We hope you encourage your loved one who is living in a long-term care home or assisted living facility to complete the survey, and if necessary, offer to help them complete it. We want to hear from all family members impacted by the visitor policy, so please let your other family members know about this survey. If you have any questions about the survey, call 1-877-952-3181 or email: [info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca](mailto:info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca)

### Good news stories about long-term care homes and assisted living facilities in Northern Health

- Prince George nursing student creates video to help older adults manage loneliness and social isolation: <https://stories.northernhealth.ca/stories/prince-george-nursing-student-creates-video-help-older-adults-manage-loneliness-and-social>
- Music at Rotary Manor: Reckless Love: <https://stories.northernhealth.ca/stories/music-rotary-manor-reckless-love>
- Heritage Manor II residents share thanks and well wishes: <https://stories.northernhealth.ca/stories/heritage-manor-ii-residents-share-thanks-and-well-wishes>

### For reliable information about COVID-19, we recommend:

- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- The Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>
- The BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Coronavirus-FAQ-English.pdf>

By working together, we can protect your own health, the health of your loved ones, and the health of Northern Health staff members.

- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- BC Govt. COVID-19 Helpline: **1-888-COVID19** or **1-888-268-4319**

Previous updates for residents and families in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities:

- July 2, 2020: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-3.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-3.pdf)
- July 14, 2020: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-4.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-4.pdf)
- July 30, 2020: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-5.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-5.pdf)
- August 12, 2020: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-6.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-6.pdf)