

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

Issue 8 – September 22, 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.

Why are our visits monitored?

Staff in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities are monitoring visits with families to ensure masks are worn for the duration of the visit, physical distancing is kept, and visitors maintain clean hands before and after the visit. Monitoring also allows staff to attend to any resident needs during the visit. These measures are in place to protect residents, family members and staff.

According to the infection prevention and control requirements for COVID-19 in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities, "care homes/residences must be able to safely provide oversight for family/social visits, including adequate staffing to provide pre-screening, screening on arrival, providing information on infection and prevention control for the visit, monitoring the visit, monitoring leaving of the residence." This information is from: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19 LongTermCareAssistedLiving.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19%20LongTermCareAssistedLiving.pdf)

Northern Health continues to thank you for understanding during this incredibly difficult time.

When can we hug or hold hands with our loved ones?

It is our understanding that the policy has not changed and visitors still need to be cautious and follow the physical distancing guidelines as per the Provincial Health Officer. This means visitors need to please maintain a distance of 2 arm lengths from others.

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, but if you're not comfortable doing this there are several other options:

- A copy can be downloaded from 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

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
- July 14, 2020: 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
- August 12, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-6.pdf
- September 3, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-7.pdf