

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

Issue 11 – November 16, 2020

To keep you informed about the changing information about COVID-19, we're producing this update for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities twice per month.

New masking guidelines

The province has issued a new policy: [Mask Use in Health Care Facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). The policy requires that visitors wear medical masks in health care facilities. There's additional direction in the policy for health care workers, non-clinical staff, and residents. We'll be starting to implement these changes over the coming weeks.

Visitors to long-term care homes and assisted living facilities will be provided a medical mask by the facility that they must wear while they are in a facility and for the duration of their visit. Residents will now have to wear masks when outside of their rooms. Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks on the Northern Health social media channels and through this digest.

Christmas and holiday plans

Northern Health is working on determining what we're able to do for this year for the holidays when it comes to decorating, gifts, and visits. We understand this is a very important time of year and people want to spend it with their loved ones. We're working to assure that resident and family choices are informed and done safely.

Outbreak guidelines in long-term care homes

Northern Health has an in-depth and detailed outbreak plan to respond to any potential outbreaks in our long-term care homes. This outbreak manual has been valuable during our recent outbreak at Rotary Manor in Dawson Creek.

This guideline was developed to help Northern Health long-term care homes to prepare, detect and respond to cases of COVID-19 in their facilities. Managing a COVID-19 outbreak can be challenging. This guideline ensures that during an outbreak the risk of transmission/passing the virus to other residents, as well as staff members, is reduced.

In addition, the outbreak guidelines provide a guidance on outbreak prevention and detection, increased resident symptom screening, and enhanced environmental cleaning, testing, and special care of resident(s).

Fall flu campaign

Discussions are continuing with the long-term care homes and assisted living facilities around the flu campaign for this year to ensure that all residents who want to be immunized this year can be. Preparations are well under way and most sites are able to implement the same process they've followed in previous years, and do so safely.

The assisted living sites will have residents attend one of the local flu clinics in their community, or a NH primary care nurse comes to the home and offer a flu clinic for the residents who wish to receive the flu immunization.

For long-term care homes, either the community pharmacist comes to the home to provide immunizations and/or one of the nurses on staff provides the immunizations to the residents.

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:

- September 3, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-7.pdf
- September 22, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-8.pdf
- October 7, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-9.pdf
- October 27, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-10.pdf