

# Frequently asked questions about in-home services

Dear patient and household members,

This is a challenging and stressful time for all Northern BC residents. We would like to share the precautions and actions that Northern Health staff, including those who are providing you and members of your household care and service, are taking to ensure services continue to be provided safely. It's important for you to know that our practices align with the direction of the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada. We strongly encourage you to continue to engage with your health care providers during this time. It's important you continue your services wherever possible, for the benefit of your health.

## **Q: Where is Northern Health getting their information on how to manage COVID-19 in the north?**

The Ministry of Health, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) are working to respond to this illness, and health authorities across the province continue to be very much involved in planning and preparation.

## **Q: I want the people coming to my home to wear more protective equipment. Can I make this request?**

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, masks, eye protection, and gowns, is used according to recommendations from the BC Ministry of Health and our Infection Prevention and Control experts. At a minimum, you can expect your care provider will practice good hand hygiene, wear a standard procedural mask, eye protection, and gloves. Depending on your symptoms or the care being provided, they may also wear a gown or a different type of mask. The recommendations may change based on individual need.

We understand you may feel nervous if you don't see the staff member providing care to you wearing a full set of PPE. Our teams are well trained in what PPE to wear and your care provider will be wearing the correct PPE needed to provide safe care to you. Please be reassured that those needs are tailored to you and we're regularly updating our practices, as required.

## **Q: I want the people coming to my home NOT to wear any PPE because it may cause my neighbours to think that I have COVID-19.**

PPE, such as gloves, masks, eye protection, and gowns, is used according to recommendations from the BC Ministry of Health and our Infection Prevention and Control experts. To provide care safely, health care workers must wear personal protective equipment. This equipment keeps you safe and our health care workers safe. It also ensures patients seen before and after you are safe. We understand it may be alarming for you or others to see this. These actions are for everyone's protection.

**Q: If I want to put my services on ‘hold,’ will I be able to have them start again?**

Some families are choosing to place their services and/or care on hold as their own home circumstances evolve and change. If you choose to do this, our teams will be ready to welcome you and/or members of your household back to receive services and/or care when you are ready.

**Q: I want to keep receiving services. What can I expect from Northern Health staff coming into my home?**

You will receive a phone call in advance of our visit. The person on the phone will ask how you’re feeling that day. This information helps us plan what to bring for personal protective equipment. When your caregiver arrives, they’ll put on the required personal protective equipment before entering your home. After care and services are complete, they’ll take off the personal protective equipment and place it in an outdoor garbage bin. Eye protection will be cleaned and saved. It’s placed in an outdoor garbage bin because it may take up a lot of space inside of someone’s home; the equipment is not dangerous. If a piece of equipment happens to be left behind, pick it up and dispose of it in a normal way. Be sure to thoroughly wash your hands afterwards (minimum of 20 seconds, with soap and warm water).

**Q: I keep receiving phone calls where someone is asking me if I have symptoms or if anyone in my home has symptoms. Why is this happening?**

Northern Health staff are calling before we come so we know how much personal protective equipment we need to bring with us each day in our work. Having your personal health information in advance will help us to plan better. We will not withhold services or care based on your symptoms; we will just come better prepared.

**Q: How can I know that the caregiver/s coming to my home are not sick?**

Health care workers and care providers are in constant contact with their managers to monitor any personal symptoms. Personal symptoms are taken very seriously. If a staff member is showing any symptoms, they’re asked to stay home and rest until it’s determined they’re well enough to return to work.