

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

Issue 12 – November 24, 2020

To keep you informed about the changing information about COVID-19 and other information, 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 about Mask Use in Health Care Facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic (http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/Mask_Use_Health_Care_Facilities.pdf).

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

The facility will provide medical masks to visitors of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities that they must wear while they are in a facility and for the duration of their visit.

Residents

Nothing has changed for masking guidelines for residents. These are the current guidelines in place:

- If a resident has COVID-19 symptoms, they'll be given a medical mask to wear.
- If residents don't have COVID-19 symptoms or they're in their room or in a common area, they don't need to wear a mask.
- Even in an outbreak, it's not an expectation that residents wear masks all day.

Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks on the Northern Health social media channels and through this digest.

How is an outbreak determined?

The decision to call an outbreak in a facility is based on provincial directives around long-term care facilities and in consultation with the Medical Health Officers in Northern Health.

As a measure of precaution, outbreaks are declared in long-term care home if one resident or health care worker has a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19. This way, enhanced measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 can be put in place immediately.

In the event of an outbreak, residents are monitored for COVID-19 symptoms at least twice daily, cleaning protocols increase, recreation events are suspended, and social visits are suspended until the outbreak is declared over, however, essential visits are still allowed.

Annual rate letters for residents and families

We're now mailing letters to residents and families about the new facility rates for 2021. If you have questions about your rate or letter contact your health care team. For more information on how rates are calculated, visit <https://www.northernhealth.ca/services/home-community-care/costs>

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 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
- November 16, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-11.pdf