

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

Issue 17 – February 23, 2021

We continue in our commitment to keep you informed about the changing information about COVID-19 and other information by producing this update for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities twice per month.

COVID-19 vaccine update

Residents, health care workers, and essential visitors in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities continue to be among the priority populations to receive COVID-19 Vaccinations. By the end of January 2021, Northern Health completed the majority of immunizations to these priority groups, for those who wanted the vaccine.

Northern Health continues to work with the BC Ministry of Health on the plan to ensure the second dose is administered. Some communities have already started to administer the second dose and this will continue over the next weeks to months. The clinic dates and locations are being scheduled, and staff, physicians, and residents are being notified according to their eligibility. Northern Health is working with the BC Ministry of Health on the next phase of the COVID-19 vaccine plan, which is based on the next identified priority population, as well as when more of the vaccine will be available.

Visiting restrictions

Even though everyone who wanted to get the vaccine has received their first dose, visiting restrictions for long-term care homes and assisted living facilities still need to stay in place. Everyone who receives the vaccine will still need to follow public health guidance and follow orders from the Provincial Health Officer. After you get a vaccine, it will still be extremely important to continue to practice all the preventive measures that have been recommended, including washing your hands, maintaining a safe physical distance, wearing a mask, and staying home when sick. There are several reasons this is important:

- It takes about 2 weeks for your body to gain protection from the COVID-19 vaccine. This means that if you contracted COVID-19 before getting the vaccine, or within the 2 week period following the vaccine, you may still get sick from COVID-19. So if you experience symptoms of COVID-19 after you've been vaccinated, use the BC self-assessment tool (<https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>) to determine if you need to be tested.
- The vaccine won't stop everyone from getting COVID-19. For those who do get the virus, it is less likely you will experience severe illness.
- The vaccine is 95% effective, but you could be in the 5% that don't have immunity. You can still spread COVID-19 if you touch things and don't wash your hands or interact with people in close proximity.
- After receiving your COVID-19 vaccine, be sure to keep a copy of your immunization record. By registering for [Health Gateway](#), you will be able to access a digital copy of your COVID-19 vaccine record. The Health Gateway is a single place for BC residents to access their health records.

As things change, public health measures will be updated and adjusted. It is important to keep following public health recommendations.

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

- Two long-term care beds added earlier this year to Rotary Manor: <https://stories.northernhealth.ca/stories/two-long-term-care-beds-added-earlier-year-rotary-manor>

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:

- December 17, 2020: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-13.pdf
- January 11, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-14.pdf
- January 27, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-15.pdf
- February 17, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-16.pdf