

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

Issue 25 – July 16, 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 once a month.

Changes to long-term care and assisted living visitor policies effective July 19, 2021

- Visitors no longer need to schedule or book in advance to visit loved ones, and the limit on the number of visitors for each resident is removed. Visits will still take place during regular visiting hours. Contact your facility to find out what their designated visiting hours are.
- Larger, facility-wide social events or gatherings are safe to begin again.
- Indoor gatherings may include residents and staff across units of a facility, while outdoor gatherings may include family and friends.
- As a protective measure to reduce the risk for introduction and spread of COVID-19, it is **recommended** that visitors are **fully immunized (14 days after receiving second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine) against COVID-19 and provide proof of vaccination** prior to entering the facility.
- Fully immunized visitors will be required to wear a medical mask while moving through the facility and in common areas but **are not** required to wear a mask while in direct contact with the person they are visiting.
- Visitors who do not demonstrate they are fully immunized are required to wear a medical mask for the duration of their visit, including when in direct contact with the person they are visiting.
- In-person tours of facilities for potential residents may also resume, provided all infection prevention and control measures are followed, including individuals wearing a medical mask for the duration of the tour.
- All visitors will be screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, prior to entry at every visit. Visitors with signs or symptoms of illness, as well as those in self-isolation in accordance with public health directives, will not be permitted to visit. Residents and visitors still need to continue to practice proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Proof of Vaccination options:

- Electronic record available online through [Health Gateway](#)
- A copy of immunization record on yellow paper received from Northern Health vaccine clinics
- Other forms of documentation that provide proof of vaccination

Volunteers now allowed back in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities

- Non-essential **volunteers** in long term care and seniors' assisted living may now resume.
- In accordance to the direction from the PHO, all volunteers are required to be **fully immunized against COVID-19 and provide proof of vaccination** and be familiar with the responsibilities and expectations regarding outbreak prevention, detection, and management in the facility.
- In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak at a facility, volunteers will be restricted to essential volunteers only.

- A centralized phone line for volunteers is being developed. In the meantime, please contact your facility with any questions

Adult Day Programs are working to re-open by September 21, 2021

- Adult day programs and in-facility respite can fully resume, providing additional health and well-being benefits for seniors and caregivers in community.
- All adult day program participants are required to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination, with exception by Medical Health Officer approval only and with appropriate infection prevention and control precautions in place
- In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in an adjoining home or residence, adult day programs will be suspended.
- Recognizing a period of transition is needed to re-open adult day programs safely, the target opening date for all Northern Health adult day programs is **September 21, 2021**.

For reliable information about COVID-19, we recommend:

- 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 Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **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:

- May 17, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-23.pdf
- June 16, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-24.pdf