

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

Issue 31 – Oct 18, 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 visitation requirements for long-term care homes and assisted living facilities

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in BC, the Ministry of Health, in consultation with BC's Provincial Health Officer, mobilized to rapidly respond to the risk of COVID-19 transmission in care settings. Several enhanced protective measures have been put in place to minimize the risk for introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities and protect those most vulnerable to serious illness.

On October 12, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Health announced details on updated requirements for visitation in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities. In recognition of the added layer of protection provided by the COVID-19 vaccines and given the vulnerability of residents in long-term care and assisted living even when fully immunized themselves, all visitors (both essential and social) are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19, excluding young children ineligible for vaccination or those with an approved medical exemption. Proof of vaccination (e.g. BC Vaccine Card - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof> - or equivalent) is required prior to entering or passing through the facility.

### Effective October 12, 2021:

- Visitors are required to show proof of vaccination prior to entry, including if only to pass through the facility to access an outdoor space
- Visitors who do not demonstrate that they are either partially or fully vaccinated will not be able to enter a facility (excluding young children under the age of vaccine eligibility or those with an approved medical exemption)
- Partially or unvaccinated visitors must adhere to all required preventative measures including wearing a medical mask for the duration of the visit
- Unvaccinated visitors with no dose may visit outside, but cannot enter the facility to get to the visiting location

### Effective October 26, 2021:

- Visitors must demonstrate they are fully vaccinated to enter a facility (excluding young children under the age of vaccine eligibility or those with an approved medical exemption)
- Unvaccinated visitors with no dose may visit outside, but cannot enter the facility to get to the visiting location

These visitor requirements apply to all long-term care homes, assisted living facilities, and the long-term care and assisted living areas of our multi-level care facilities (Fort Nelson, Chetwynd, McBride, Mackenzie, Stuart Lake, Houston, Wrinch Memorial, Northern Haida Gwaii, and Xaayda Gwaay Ngaaysdli Naay).

Exceptions regarding vaccination status in circumstances related to compassionate care such as end-of life visits will be considered on an individual basis for partially or unvaccinated individuals.

Additional information regarding visitation, including proof of vaccination requirements, in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities can be found through the BC Centre for Disease Control – Long-Term Care and Assisted Living (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/long-term-care-facilities-assisted-living>).

Just a reminder that you can also continue with virtual visits with your loved one, and can contact the facility to set these up.

Thank you for continuing to take the necessary steps to enable support residents and staff to stay safe during these challenging times. Your support is greatly appreciated.

**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:

- July 16, 2021: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-25.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-25.pdf)
- August 10, 2021: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-26.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-26.pdf)
- September 2021: [https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern\\_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-28.pdf](https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-28.pdf)