

COVID-19: Visitor Restrictions in Long-Term Care & Seniors' Assisted Living

March 25, 2021



Stay Informed Via These Resources:

gov.bc.ca/Covid-19 | bccdc.ca | 1-888-COVID19

Symptom Self-Assessment:

covid19.thrive.health



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Background

- Since March 2020, restrictions on visitation have been in place in Long-Term Care (LTC) and Seniors' Assisted Living (AL) facilities in B.C.
- Protecting those most vulnerable to severe illness is a priority and Phase 1 of BC's COVID-19 Immunization Plan immunized:
 - Residents and staff of LTC and AL
 - Essential visitors
 - Individuals assessed for and awaiting LTC
- With this added layer of protection, and recognizing the impact on residents and families, it is an appropriate time to ease visitor restrictions and support more safe social connections in LTC and AL.

Changes to Social Visitation – Starting April 1, 2021

- All residents can have regular, frequent and routine opportunities for social visitation.
- Visits must allow for a minimum of 60 minutes.
- Requirement for a 'single designated social visitor' removed to allow additional family and friends to visit.
- Expanding number of visitors allowed at a time (up to two visitors, plus a child).
- Location of visits changed to enable family and friends to visit in resident rooms without staff monitoring.
- Allowing physical touch to occur between visitor and resident with appropriate Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures in place (e.g., hand hygiene, masks).

Supporting Social and Emotional Connection

- Removing physical distancing requirements between residents.
- Resume communal dining and small group social or recreational activities for residents, within a facility unit or floor.
- Residents will be supported to go on outings with no requirements for isolation upon return.
- Removing requirement for 14 day isolation for admissions into the facility, and providing immunizations if needed.

Safety Remains a Priority

- COVID -19 outbreaks have decreased in LTC & AL but current rate of community transmission remains a concern.
- Visitors and Operators will need to remain diligent with safety precautions to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all.
- Strict adherence to Infection Prevention & Control practices are essential.
- Regular screening of residents and visitors for signs of illness.
- Visitors to stay home if they are feeling unwell.

Continued Practice Requirements

- Social visitation will continue to require advanced booking, screening of visitors, use of medical masks, and practicing frequent hand hygiene.
- Social visitation will continue to be suspended during outbreaks.
- Essential visitation remains in place and any resident who requires an essential visitor is supported.
- The appeals process through the Patient Care Quality Office for Essential and Social Visitation remains in place.

Next Steps

- Changes are effective April 1st to June 30, 2021.
- Posting updated Visitor and Infection Prevention and Control Guidance.
- Ongoing monitoring of implementation to ensure operators and residents are supported.
- Commitment to review and evaluate visitor restrictions as we move forward.