



March 14, 2022

UPDATE TO ALL FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Hello,

Donegal is now officially cleared from outbreak!

There are a number of changes to COVID protocols effective today. Attached to this update are resources for residents and families provided from the province regarding the changes. The Visitor, Absences and Social Gatherings Snapshot is also available on our website:

https://stpats.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Visitor_Absences_Social-Gatherings-Snapshot_2022-03_09_EN.pdf

As indicated in Friday's update, St. Pat's will be maintaining its mandatory vaccine policy for everyone who enters the home. As of Monday March 14, 2022, everyone entering the home must have proof of a 3rd dose of a COVID vaccine. Designated caregivers who are not yet eligible for their 3rd dose must provide proof of their 3rd dose within 30 days of being eligible.

As a reminder, St. Pat's Board of Directors and Leadership Team are currently in the process of strategic planning for the future. An important part of this planning is to engage staff, residents, families and other stakeholders. An invitation for families to join in facilitated sessions to provide their feedback regarding strategic priorities is available on our website:

<https://stpats.ca/family-strategic-planning-consultation-invitation/>

Be well and stay safe,

Janet Morris
President and CEO

Long-Term Care Visitor, Absences & Social Gatherings Snapshot As of March 14, 2022

		Requirements	
		Non-outbreak	Outbreak/ Resident in Quarantine
<p>VISITORS</p> <p>Masks required at all times. Eating and drinking not permitted except where a home is able to provide designated space</p> <p>Up to four visitors (including caregivers) per resident at a time (unless in outbreak or quarantine)</p> <p>Visitors need to follow the individual home's vaccination policy</p>	<p>Essential – Caregivers</p> <p>Maximum four designated (unless previously designated)</p>	<p>Physical distancing with the resident not required</p> <p>May support in dining room, join in activities</p> <p>Must be screened and tested to enter home</p>	<p>One caregiver per visit may support in resident's room or quarantine room</p>
	<p>General Visitors</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>New: Physical distancing with the resident not required</p> <p>May support in dining room, join in activities</p> <p>Must be screened and tested to enter home</p>	<p>Not permitted, unless visiting a resident receiving end of life care</p>
		Requirements*	
		All Residents	Outbreak/ Resident in Quarantine
<p>ABSENCES</p> <p>Medical mask required, follow IPAC, active screening on return</p> <p>Testing and isolation requirements following an absence are set out in the Long-Term Care Guidance Document and the COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units</p>	<p>Medical, Compassionate, or Palliative</p>	Permitted	
	<p>Short Term – Essential (less than 24 hours)</p>	Permitted	
	<p>Short Term – Social (less than 24 hours)</p>	Permitted for all residents (regardless of vaccination status)	Not permitted
	<p>Temporary – Social (2+ days or overnight)</p>	New: Permitted for residents (regardless of vaccination status)	Not permitted
<p>SOCIAL GATHERINGS</p> <p>Residents wear mask if tolerated, IPAC adherence, cleaning prior/ after</p>	<p>Organized Events or Social Gatherings</p>	<p>New: No cohorting required</p> <p>Limited capacity in a room</p> <p>Social group activities should be in small groups</p>	Advice of the PHU
<p>DINING</p>	<p>Communal Dining</p>	<p>Cohorting of residents is required. Physical distancing at table not required</p> <p>Physical distancing between dining tables as much as possible</p> <p>Buffet and family style dining permitted.</p> <p>Caregivers and visitors may join residents while remaining masked at all times</p>	In-suite dining

Key Messages to Support Residents and Families in LTC Homes

March 9, 2022

- Trends in key public health and health care indicators continue to improve each week. For example, outbreaks, hospitalizations, and intensive care unit admissions have been declining.
- With the Omicron wave receding, steps are being taken to re-open Ontario, including easing measures in long-term care homes.
- The Ministry of Long-Term Care has been working closely with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health on a risk-based approach in long-term care that balances measures that are still needed to reduce COVID-19 risk with the importance of overall resident health, wellbeing and quality of life.
- As of March 14th, to support this balance and reflect where we are in the pandemic:
 - All general visitors, including children under the age of 5, can visit homes. Visitors (including caregivers), with the exception of children under the age of 5, need to follow the vaccination policy of the individual long-term care home.
 - Outdoor visits can be any size, space permitting.
 - There can be up to 4 general visitors and/or caregivers visiting a resident at one time.
 - All residents can go on social overnight absences.
 - Social activities can be among different groups of residents. Cohorting is required for dining only.
 - Social group activities can be larger in size while crowding should be avoided and masking continued, including for residents where tolerated.
- Also as of March 14th, the provincial directive requiring homes to have a consistent vaccination policy will be revoked. This is about continuing to move towards a steady state and means each home is responsible for its own vaccination policy.

- For greater clarity, revoking the provincial directive does not impact on the ability of homes to retain their employer-led vaccination policies provided they follow applicable laws, such as the *Human Rights Code* and the *Long-Term Care Homes Act*, including the Residents' Bill of Rights.
- Vaccination remains a key defense against COVID-19 and all Ontarians who are eligible are encouraged to get vaccinated, including receiving a booster dose.
- Everyone is reminded of the importance of remaining vigilant with public health measures, such as screening and testing, masking and using appropriate personal protective equipment.
- The ministry continues to work with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health to monitor trends and will respond as needed if for example, a new variant emerges.

Questions and Answers

Q: Why is the ministry moving away from mandatory vaccination for all long-term care homes and allowing homes to implement their own/different vaccination policies?

A: The provincial directive was needed earlier in the pandemic to consistently support all homes to put a vaccination policy in place. The provincial directive specified the elements that must be in each policy at a minimum and those specifics changed over time. Most recently the provincial directive was updated to include a third dose requirement for staff, students, volunteers, support workers and caregivers. All homes now have a vaccination policy in place, and at this point in the pandemic we are able to shift from a provincial directive that requires homes to have a mandatory vaccination policy to a guidance-based approach that continues to support homes with their employer-led policies and best practices.

While the provincial directive is revoked effective March 14, 2022, long-term care homes can keep their vaccination policies in place, with any changes they have determined to be appropriate. For example, homes may not retain a third dose requirement if, for example, they are concerned about staffing. Home policies can continue to have requirements for staff, volunteers, support workers, student placements, caregivers, general visitors, or other people entering a long-term care home. These requirements must be consistent with the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, including the Residents' Bill of Rights, and comply with all applicable laws, such as the Human Rights Code.

Q: Could staff that were previously put on leave or terminated due to not getting vaccinated return to work?

A: Long-term care homes, as employers, can keep their vaccination policies in place. They retain their ability to mandate vaccination requirements. Home policies can continue to have requirements for staff, volunteers, support workers, student placements, caregivers, general visitors, or other people entering a long-term care home. These requirements must be consistent with the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, including the Residents' Bill of Rights, and comply with all applicable laws, such as the Human Rights Code. Homes need to communicate how their vaccination policy is continuing beyond the life of the provincial directive.

Q: What if I am not comfortable with an unvaccinated staff member providing me care?

A: Regardless of vaccination status, all staff are actively screened when they enter a long-term care home and must be tested regularly for COVID-19. Staff must also wear appropriate personal protective equipment when providing care to residents. We encourage you to speak to your home if you have concerns about the care you are receiving.

Q: Are masks still required?

A: All staff and visitors must wear a medical mask for the entire duration of their shift or visit (including in the residents' room). Additionally, a medical or non-medical mask is required for the entire duration of an outdoor visit for general visitors. Removal of masks for the purposes of eating should be restricted to only areas designated by the home.

Residents are encouraged by their home to wear, or be assisted to wear, a medical mask or non-medical mask when receiving direct care from staff, when in common areas with other residents (with the exception of meal times), and when receiving a visitor, as tolerated.

Q: Who can visit a resident in a long-term care home?

A: As of March 14, 2022, all persons can visit a long-term care home as long as they follow the home's vaccination policy. Children under the age of 5 can also visit homes although they are not eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Can general visitors and essential caregivers join residents for a meal and for social gatherings (both for communal dining or in the resident's room)?

A: Caregivers and general visitors may accompany a resident for meals to assist a resident with eating, however, they need to always keep their mask on and are not able to eat with the resident. Caregivers and general visitors do not need to physically distance themselves from residents they are visiting and may join group activities with residents as space permits.

Q: Will any vaccination requirements remain in place for residents who go on social absences?

A: As of March 14, 2022, all residents, regardless of their vaccination status, can enjoy social absences of any duration, including overnight absences.

Q: Who can I contact if I have any issues or questions?

A: If you have questions about the Ministry's direction or requirements, please contact MLTCpandemicresponse@ontario.ca. If you have questions about a specific home's vaccination policy, please contact the individual home.



COVID-19 Policies: What Residents Can Expect in a Long-Term Care Home

(As of March 14, 2022 unless otherwise specified)



All residents may* ...

- Enjoy the company of general visitors, consistent with the individual home's vaccination policy
- Have up to four visitors (including caregivers) at a time indoors, consistent with the individual home's vaccination policy.
- Enjoy outdoor visits, with the number of visitors based on the home's policy.
- Participate in group social activities, including games, clubs and exercises.
- Have meals in the dining room, including buffet and family-style meals.
- Leave the home for all types of absences, including social day and overnight absences.

*Unless otherwise directed by the local public health unit or when isolating

What temporary measures are in place to safeguard long-term care homes?

- All staff, students, volunteers, caregivers, support workers and general visitors must be screened and wear masks, whether inside or outside. Those visiting indoors must also be tested.
- Continued infection prevention and control measures will be followed, including distancing between groups and dining tables, masking, hand washing and enhanced cleaning.

What if the home is in outbreak?

Residents can expect the following if the area of the home they live in is in outbreak*:

- Group activities, dining and social gatherings may continue in non-outbreak areas if residents can follow public health measures.
- For outbreak areas of a home, residents will be cohorted in small groups for all essential activities. Group activities for cohorts may continue/resume if operationally feasible.
- Communal dining, non-essential activities and personal care services will be suspended or modified.
- Caregivers can still visit.

*Unless otherwise directed by the local public health unit



COVID-19 Safety Measures for Absences

(As of March 14, 2022 unless otherwise specified)

Whenever outside of the home, residents should do their best to:

- Wear a mask (as tolerated)
- Wash hands frequently
- Limit their contact with others. Avoid crowds and large social gatherings with crowding.

What happens when I return home?

When residents return from a day absence they will:

- Be actively screened
- Undergo rapid antigen testing and a PCR test on day five following the absence.
- Residents who are away frequently can choose to take a PCR test and rapid antigen test, on the same day, twice per week (for example, a PCR and rapid test on Tuesday, with both repeated on Friday). No quarantine is required unless a positive result is received.

When residents return from an overnight absence they will:

- Be actively screened and then monitored for symptoms twice daily for 10 days
 - If returning from a hospital*: PCR or rapid antigen tested prior to or when returning home and quarantined until a negative test result can be obtained.
 - If returning from the community: be screened and quarantine on arrival until negative PCR test result or rapid molecular test result from day five test. Those residents who do not have 3 or 4 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine are required to quarantine for 10 days with a PCR test on day five.

Note: Residents who have been COVID-19 positive in the past 90 days may not be required to undergo testing and quarantine requirements when returning from an absence unless they have symptoms of COVID-19.

*Assuming hospital is not in outbreak, resident is not symptomatic and/or had been exposed to COVID-19. If the hospital is in outbreak the PHU will advise on testing and quarantine requirements.

What if I come into contact with someone with COVID-19?

Residents with 3 or 4 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine:

- Screened on arrival and quarantined until a negative result is obtained from the day five test

Residents who are not vaccinated or do not have their 3rd dose:

- Screened on arrival and quarantined for 10 days with a PCR test on day five.
- All residents are still permitted to see their caregivers while in quarantine