

Social Visiting: Long-Term Care Facility (LTCF)

<p>Site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-term Care Island-Wide ○ Respite ○ Affiliates & Owned & Operated 	<p>Scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience: Managers and Directors of Care (DOC), Charge Nurses, RN/RPN, LPN, Allied Health, LTC Leadership • Indications: Social Visiting • Exceptions: For Essential Visiting, Essential Health Visits or Palliative & End of Life Visiting—please refer to these guidelines specifically.
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Need to know:

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) and BC Centre for Disease Control (BC CDC) introduced social visiting on June 30, 2020 in order to support visits with residents of LTC homes.
- Phase 1 of BC’s COVID-19 Immunization plan immunized residents and staff of LTC and AL, essential visitors and individual assessed and awaiting LTC. With this added layer of protection, and recognizing the impact of visitor restrictions on residents and families, visitor restrictions in LTC and AL have been eased effective April 1, 2021.
- This document supplements the [Ministry of Health-Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors’ Assisted Living](#) guideline and outlines additional direction for long-term care facilities in Island Health.

1.0 General Principles

- Social visits will be maximized at all sites while ensuring appropriate public health safety measures are followed. These include:
 - Social visits must be booked in advance
 - Active screening of all visitors for COVID-19 symptoms including temperature check according to the [COVID-19 Long-term Care Facility Screening by Greeter guideline](#)
 - Information for contact tracing recorded (name, phone number) and retained by site
 - All visitors perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) upon entry and exit of facility
 - All visitors must wear a medical-grade mask provided by the site for the duration of indoor and outdoor visits
 - Children 2 and under are not required to wear a mask
 - Children 3-12 years are recommended to wear a medical-grade mask
 - Children aged 12 and above are required to wear a medical-grade mask
- Sites will follow all existing infection control procedures as outlined in [BC CDC & BC MOH Infection Prevention and Control interim Guidance for Long-term Care and Assisted Living](#)

- [Please note that visitor guidelines in this provincial government document have yet to be updated to reflect the changes effective April 1, 2021](#)
- Residents are entitled to regular, frequent and routine opportunities to engage in social visits. Essential visits and outings are separate from social visits.
- Residents' differing needs for what is required for meaningful visits should be accounted for in determining appropriate frequency and maximum duration of visits
- Social visits are intended to support the emotional well-being of residents. Residents can refuse to consent for a visit, and this will be respected
- Social visiting will be suspended during outbreaks
- The easing of restrictions does not negate the need to identify a resident's essential needs, identify essential visitors and develop essential visit care plans

2.0 Social Visiting: Operational Considerations

- Social Visiting Plan:
 - Site Leadership will review their social visiting plan monthly with updates made in accordance with current practice requirements provided by BC CDC, BC Ministry of Health and Island Health.
 - The visiting plan is informed by WorkSafeBC, infection prevention and control practices, and current public health recommendations.
 - The visiting plan should be accessible for review or audit purposes by Licensing and/or Island Health LTC Leadership.
 - Site leadership should ensure a clear process for scheduling and co-ordinating social visiting, ensuring visitors and care team members are aware of the process.
- Social Visitors:
 - *As of April 1, 2021 there is no longer a requirement for a resident to have a single designated social visitor.*
 - The maximum number of visitors at one time per resident when indoors is 2 adults and 1 child
 - A child is a person under the age of 18
 - There is no limit to the frequency, length of visit or number of different visitors per resident
 - Social visits are offered a minimum of 60 minutes
 - Each resident is entitled to a minimum of one hour of visitation weekly
 - Any limits on the frequency or duration of visits should only be to meet WorkSafeBC safety plans (See [COVID-19 Safety Plans](#))

- Visiting Location:
 - Residents will meet their visitors in a pre-determined visiting location
 - The location for a social visit can be:
 - Resident's room (single or shared room)
 - Visiting in a shared room needs to take into consideration the needs and requirements of everyone in the shared room and the ability to adhere to physical distancing between visitors of different residents.
 - Designated visiting room in facility; or
 - Outdoor designated area
 - Visits in open outdoor areas may accommodate more people in alignment with current [Province wide Restrictions](#) for gatherings and events
- Outings
 - Residents will be supported to leave for outings, with no limitations beyond current public health guidance regarding indoor and outdoor gatherings
 - Residents leaving the facility need to sign-in and sign-out per [Release of Resident from Long-term Care Licensed Homes procedure](#)
 - Residents do not require isolation upon return to facility unless returning with symptoms of illness
 - Operators will provide residents with a medical-grade mask to wear when they are leaving the facility on an outing
 - There is no restriction to the length of outings. Residents are able to go on overnight visits.
- Gifts, Flowers & Food
 - There is no restriction regarding family who want to bring gifts, flowers and food
 - Flowers remain subject to scent free policies
 - There is no requirement to hold/quarantine any items brought in by visitors
- Pets
 - Pets can be brought in by a social visitor during a visit if
 - The pet visits the individual resident receiving the visit only
 - The pet is not actively ill
 - Established facility pets can interact with residents.
 - Hand hygiene is recommended before and after pet interactions as much as possible
- Managing Complaints
 - Refer to [COVID-19: Long-term Care and Registered Assisted Living Visitor Appeal and Review Process](#)
 - Each site must ensure timely responsiveness to complaints about social visits, collaborating with residents, families and Island Health to resolve any issues.

3.0 Social Visiting: Pre-Visit, Visit & Post-Visit Considerations

Pre-Visit

- At time of booking visiting appointment, screening criteria will be provided by the Greeter. Visitors are advised to self-screen and cancel appointment if necessary
- Social visitors must be actively screened at the Greeter Station on arrival per [COVID-19 Long-term Care Facility Screening by Greeter procedure](#)
- Greeter will support social visitors to follow best practices and provide education about hand hygiene with ABHR, donning a medical-grade mask, respiratory etiquette and maintaining physical distancing while in the facility
- Site must maintain a Visitor List with current contact information provided by visitors (name and phone number for Public Health Contact Tracing if needed)

Visit

- Medical-grade masks must be worn for the duration of the visit both indoors and outdoors
- Social visitors are able to visit one resident per visit
- Social visitors need to go directly to the visiting location to limit movement within the facility. Greeters will be available to guide visitors to visit location if needed
- Social visitors are not permitted to participate in group activities or communal dining
- Physical touch between social visitors and resident is allowed provided infection control practices hand hygiene and wearing of a medical-grade masks followed

Post-Visit

- Any furniture and surfaces in communal visiting areas will be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each visit. Visits in resident rooms do not require additional enhanced cleaning following visits
- Social visitors must perform hand hygiene with ABHR when leaving the visit location
- Social visitor must remove mask at the exit from facility
- Social visitor must leave site immediately following visit

Persons/Groups Consulted:

Medical Health Officer, Communicable Disease Nurse, Infection Control and Prevention Practitioners, Long-term Care Executive Leadership, Long-term Care Clinical Experts, LTC COVID-19 Practice Council, Long-term Care Visitor Advisory Committee

Resources

- BC CDC & BC Ministry of Health (2020). [Infection Prevention and Control Requirements for COVID-19 in Long-term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#)
- BC CDC & BC Ministry of Health (2021): [Social Visiting Guidelines Poster](#)
- Island Health (2018) [Release of Resident from Long-term Care Licensed Homes procedure](#)
- Island Health (2021) [COVID-19: Long-term Care and Registered Assisted Living Visitor Appeal and Review Process](#)
- Ministry of Health (2020). [Policy Communique: Infection Prevention and Control for Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Ministry of Health (2021) [Ministry of Health-Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#)
- Ministry of Health (2021) [Ministry of Health Questions and Answers: Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living Facilities - Easing Visitor Restrictions](#)