

## ***Key Messages – Public – Updated Visitors Policies – Long-Term Care and Seniors’ Assisted Living Facilities***

Date: August 23, 2020

---

- The Ministry of Health, working with the provincial health officer, has developed updated guidelines to support visits between family members and residents of long-term care homes and seniors’ assisted living facilities.
- Under these new guidelines for social visits, residents can visit with **one designated** family member or friend\*.

\*Facility staff/operator can approve a change to the designated visitor under extenuating circumstances; for example, if the visitor moves away or becomes ill and is unable to visit.

- One hundred percent of long-term care and seniors’ assisted living facilities have safety plans in place and are offering family/ social visits
- We have heard questions from some residents and their families, asking for further clarification around essential and social visits at acute care, long-term care and assisted living facilities.
- Essential and social visits play a big role in residents’ physical and emotional well-being. We have clarified our visitor policies with health authorities and industry partners, and requested all health authorities to:
  - Have regular discussions with facility leaders/operators to ensure that visitor policies are implemented consistently and with some flexibility to allow visits in a safe way;
  - Have signage at all main entrances to clearly communicate essential and social visit policies, with a phone number to call if visitors have questions or need assistance at the site.
- **For all visitors:**
  - You will be screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, and possible exposure to COVID-19, prior to every visit.

- You will need to bring a mask and wear it for the duration of your visit.
- Please practice hand and respiratory hygiene (cough/sneeze etiquette), and maintain two-metres of physical distance where possible.
- **If you are an essential visitor:** You may not need to schedule your visit in advance. If there is another family member or friend providing essential care, only one visitor is allowed at a time\*.

\*Except for palliative and end-of-life care, where more than one visitor may be allowed at a time.

- **If you are visiting for social reasons,** you need to
  - Book your visit with facility staff in advance,
  - Socialize in designated areas identified by facility staff, and
  - Bear in mind that visits are not allowed if there is an active COVID-19 outbreak at the residence.
- If you have any question, concern or need assistance with the facility's safety procedures, please contact the number listed on the poster at the main entrance(s).
- In addition to visits in person, we also encourage you to stay in touch with your family or friend at the facility either virtually or remotely.
- As B.C. works to continue "flattening the curve," we will continue to update the guidelines to ensure the health and safety of patients, residents, staff, and visitors.