

Admissions and Returns to Long-Term Care Homes During COVID-19

Background

Long-term care (LTC) homes are at risk for spread of COVID-19 and related severe outcomes for residents. LTC homes under the direction of the Medical Health Officer (MHO) have taken significant measures to minimize risk for exposure by restricting both staff and visitors. This risk of exposure for LTC must be balanced with the need for timely discharge from acute care and support of urgent cases in the community to ensure optimal patient flow. **As of July 19, 2021 standard process for long-term care waitlist management, interfacility transfers, in-facility respite services, and return from Temporary Absence (maximum 30 days) will be resumed. People not fully immunized against COVID-19 will be required to isolate for 14-days.** Fully immunized means a person has received 2 doses of COVID-19 vaccine and it has been 14 days or longer since receiving their second dose. Proof of vaccination status is required.

Admission / Re-Admission Requirements

1. People with COVID-19 **will not be** admitted / readmitted to LTC until symptoms have resolved and they no longer require isolation. Consultation with the MHO or Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) must occur.
2. People with known exposure to COVID-19 will not be transferred to LTC until after the 14-day period of self-isolation as directed by Public Health has lapsed, the person has remained asymptomatic, and is cleared by IPC & MHO.
3. Symptomatic patients with negative COVID-19 test and an alternative non-communicable diagnosis are admitted. Additional precautions may be required per point of care risk assessment and [Additional Precautions Guideline](#). Diagnosis and treatment informs duration of required additional precautions per [Discontinuing Precautions Guideline](#). If symptoms persist or worsen, additional COVID-19 testing may be required.
4. **Acute Care:** Where possible, people in acute care destined for LTC should be placed in a single room and the number of care providers be reduced in the period prior to LTC transfer. **LTC residents accessing acute care for outpatient or ED care** should wear a medical-grade mask if tolerated for the duration of their visit.
5. Exceptions to the above recommendations due to critical need for in-patient beds should be reviewed with the MHO and/or IPC. If admission is approved, the LTC facility must be contacted in advance so the receiving LTC facility can implement additional precautions as required.

Summary of Isolation Requirements by Admission Type

**Given the complexity of admissions and to ensure health and safety of all residents and staff in receiving LTC site, transfers should be planned and occur during business hours (Monday to Friday before 16:30)*

Admission Source	Conditions	Admit?	Isolation Duration
Hospital and Community	No COVID-19 symptoms or exposure	Yes	14-days if not fully immunized against COVID-19
Other LTC Home	Facility is COVID-19 free and resident has no symptoms	Yes	14-days if not fully immunized against COVID-19
Community - returning from Temporary Leave and Respite	If bed is available and facility is COVID-19 free	Yes	14-days if not fully immunized against COVID-19
Hospital – LTC resident after acute stay	No COVID-19 symptoms or exposure	Yes	14-days if not fully immunized against COVID-19
Hospital or clinic – after outpatient visit	No COVID-19 symptoms or exposure	Yes	None
Non-Essential health visits or other visits	No COVID-19 symptoms or exposure	Yes	None
Any location – COVID-19 case	Has COVID-19 symptoms	NO	n/a
Any location – recovered COVID-19 case	Medically cleared & isolation removed by IPC/MHO	Yes	Per IPC/MHO direction
Any location – COVID-19 close contact or high risk exposure as identified by Public Health or Infection Control	Known COVID-19 exposure	NO	n/a
Any location – other respiratory illness	Symptomatic with one negative COVID-19 test and alternative diagnosis	Yes	Depends on diagnosis and duration of treatment; 14-days if not fully immunized against COVID-19
Any Location - Person Under Investigation with unknown exposure	Symptomatic and COVID-19 test unknown, exposure may be unknown	Consultation must occur with MHO by provider for admission approval	If admission approved by MHO, 14 days isolation required if not fully immunized against COVID-19 or as directed by MHO