

# Updated COVID-19 Measures for Long-Term Care Homes

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Ontario 

## Information Session for Residents / Families and Caregivers

July 2023

# Today's Purpose

- Share recent updates to COVID-19 response measures and explain what measures remain in place.
- Answer your questions and listen to your comments and feedback.

# Context

- The Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) continues to work closely with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) to monitor the status of the pandemic.
- MLTC is now taking the next step in the phased approach to embedding COVID-19 response measures into routine operations, including changes to masking, IPAC audit frequency and isolation requirements.
- Some pandemic response measures may be reinstated if the province enters a high-risk period of respiratory virus transmission, such as during the fall respiratory virus season.

# Masking – What's New?

## For caregivers and visitors:

- Masks are recommended, but not required, in all areas of the home.
- Caregivers and visitors may now join in for dining and sharing a meal or beverage in communal areas.

# Masking – What's New?

## **For staff, students, volunteers and support workers:**

- Masks are required based on a point of care risk assessment (PCRA), consistent with existing Routine Practices, and on the return-to-work protocol following COVID-19 infection.
  - This means the individual will assess the risk of exposing themselves or others to an infection.
- Staff may consider wearing a mask during direct prolonged care (defined as one-on-one care within two metres of an individual for 15 minutes or longer).

# Masking – What's New?

## **For staff, students, volunteers and support workers:**

- Masks are required based on the return-to-work protocol following COVID-19 infection.
  - Staff with COVID-19 may now return to work once their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and they have no fever.
  - Staff should follow measures to reduce the risk of transmission for 10 days from their symptom onset/positive test, including wearing a mask and distancing from others before they remove their mask (e.g., to eat or drink).

# Masking – What's New?

## **For staff, students, volunteers and support workers:**

- Masks are no longer required in administrative and staff only areas (e.g., lunchrooms, offices, gyms).
- LTC homes are encouraged to implement “mask friendly” policies, including accommodating:
  - Staff who prefer to continue to wear a mask beyond minimum requirements.
  - Residents (or substitute decision-makers) who request that a staff member wear a mask when providing care, in alignment with the Residents’ Bill of Rights.

# Residents with COVID-19 – What's New?

## **Residents with COVID-19 : remain under isolation and under additional precautions for 10 days**

- If able to independently and consistently wear a mask, residents may leave their room provided it has been 5 days from symptom onset/positive test, symptoms have been improving for 24 hours, and they remain masked at all times when outside their room.
- If unable to mask, residents remain in isolation to day 10.
  - Residents are able to leave their room for walks in the immediate area with a staff person wearing appropriate PPE, to support overall physical and mental well-being.



# Visitors with COVID-19 – What's New?

## Visitor / caregivers with COVID-19:

- Non-essential visits to higher risk settings or to individuals at higher risk of severe outcomes should still be avoided.
- However, a visitor essential to a resident's overall health and well-being, such as a caregiver, is able to visit within the 10-day timeframe if symptoms resolved, but must follow additional precautions for 10 days, including wearing a mask.

# What measures are currently in place

The following measures continue to protect and optimize the health and safety of residents, visitors and staff:

- Masking for staff will now be based on a point of care risk assessment. Visitors and caregivers are recommended, but not required, to wear masks.
- Passive screening (self monitoring)
- Daily symptom monitoring of residents to detect the presence of infection
- Routine infection prevention and control practices (e.g., hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, ventilation)
- Access and availability of COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics

# What COVID measures are no longer in effect?

The following COVID measures no longer apply, however it is important to note that some of these measures may be needed again in the future if there is a high risk to resident and/or staff health and safety:

- Universal masking
- Physical distancing or cohorting
- Visitor restrictions
- Asymptomatic screen testing for staff and visitors
- Active screening for residents and visitors
- Absence restrictions

# Thank you! Questions?



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