

Visiting Your Loved One Q+A

May 12, 2020

Thank you for your continued support, patience, and understanding. We are all learning how to adjust to the circumstances that this pandemic demands of us. We are doing our very best to keep residents and our staff safe and healthy by making decisions based on the most recent information available to us. We are continuing to follow all orders issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

How can I visit my loved one?

There are currently two ways that you can visit with your loved one:

- **Virtually**—As has been the case since our centres were locked down to visitors, you can visit with your loved one virtually through FaceTime, Zoom, or Skype. Virtual visits using the iPads available at our centres must be scheduled to ensure we have staff available to assist with the technology. If your loved one has a device of their own and is comfortable using it independently, you can connect virtually whenever it suits you. Please remember that electronic devices are considered personal property and are the responsibility of the residents. We cannot take any responsibility for personal devices.
- **In person**—The only in person visits permitted at this time are outdoor visits. This is in accordance with an order issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. It is important for you to assess the benefit of the outdoor visits for your loved one and for yourselves in terms of physical health, safety, and emotional wellbeing. There are many conditions that **must** be adhered to for outdoor visits. If these are not met then outdoor visiting privileges will be revoked. Please see below for the conditions.

What are the conditions of outdoor visits?

1. Visits must be requested by the designated essential visitor or the resident
2. Visits must be pre-arranged and scheduled with the sites
3. Visits can have a maximum of three people—the resident, the designated essential visitor, and one other
4. You must practice social distancing; everyone must be a minimum of six feet away from one another
5. Everyone involved with outdoor visits must wear masks continuously
6. Visitors are responsible for bringing their own masks; masks must fit well and cover the nose and mouth
7. You must remain outside and cannot enter the building
 - The exception is if the outdoor space can only be accessed from within the building; in this situation visitors will need to undergo complete screening and instruction on proper use of personal protective equipment
8. Visits are dependent on staff availability
9. A resident who is in isolation cannot participate in outdoor visits
10. Outdoor visitation will not be permitted if the centre is experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak

What do you mean that I should consider the benefit of outdoor visits? Aren't they good for everyone?

It has been a long time since you and your loved ones have been able to physically see each other. This has been difficult and, by all indications, there is a long road ahead yet before we are able to reinstate full visitation. **Please remember that residents continue to be among the most vulnerable to severe effects from COVID-19. An increase in visitors to our centres also increases the risk of transmission.** Outdoor visits are a personal decision that residents and families must make together in the best interest of the health and safety of the resident.

What is an essential designated visitor?

A designated essential visitor is someone who is required to assist in carrying out the quality of life or care related activities that staff are unable to provide. In most instances, families identified a designated essential visitor for their loved one. If you haven't, please contact your Resident Care Manager.

How often can we have outdoor visits?

The frequency of outdoor visits is dependent on the health of the resident and the availability of staff to support the visit. For the time being, we are assessing and responding to each outdoor visitation request as best we can.

Can I go for a walk with my loved one?

This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and we must take physical distancing practices into account. Please contact your Resident Care Manager if this is an option you would like to discuss; we can let you know if this is a feasible option for your loved one.

Can children be part of outdoor visits?

Remember that up to three people, *including* the resident and the designated essential visitor, are allowed for outdoor visits. The third visitor can be a child, if supervised by the designated essential visitor. All visitors, including children, must wear a mask. Visitors must provide their own well-fitted masks that cover the nose and mouth. We will provide masks for residents.

Can I bring my pets to outdoor visits?

Pets are not allowed for the outdoor visits at this time.

How do I schedule an outdoor visit?

Please call the site to book a visit. Remember that visits must be prearranged and scheduled by either a resident or their designated essential visitor. Visits are dependent on staff availability.

Can I bring a package for my loved one?

Yes you can. Packages and cards must be left on the table by the main entrance that is located in between the outside doors and the doors leading to the lobby. We sanitize all packages before they come into the building are delivered to residents.

Can I come into the centre?

Only the designated essential visitor is allowed in the centre. The exception is if access to the outdoor visitation space requires that you go through the centre. In that instance, visitors

will be screened and given instruction on proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Can I continue with virtual visits?

Of course! Please continue with virtual visits; they are important points of connection. Please contact WHO to schedule virtual visits.

Is visitation different if my loved one is at end of life?

Yes. The Chief Medical Officer of Health's order clarifies that visitation is permitted when a resident is within two weeks of end of life. While it is difficult to be precise about this timeframe, our clinical team will do their very best to assess each situation carefully and thoughtfully to allow visitors to have as much time as possible with their loved one. We are monitoring residents very, very closely and will contact you should there be any change in your loved one's wellbeing.

What are the conditions for end of life visits?

- Visits must be pre-arranged and scheduled with the site
- The designated essential visitor can enter the building and approve other family members, religious leaders, children, and friends to visit
- In most instances, only one visitor can be present in the building at a time
- Visitors must wear masks and, if appropriate, additional personal protective equipment as deemed by the centre
- Visitors must practice hand hygiene and wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer before entering and leaving the resident's room

Who can I contact with questions?

Please contact your Site Administrator with questions and concerns. You can also email admin@covenantcare.ca