

# resident, staff, and family update

November 24, 2021

Dear residents, staff, and families,

We hope you are all doing well and continue to remain safe and healthy. We have a few updates to share with you.

## Proof of vaccination

As we shared in our last update, public health directives allow for continuing care and supportive living sites to implement additional policies based on local context and a collective risk assessment—which we have done. In the coming days, we will finalize our new policy mandating proof of vaccination or proof of a negative COVID test for visitors, contractors, service providers, and others entering our sites.

We firmly believe that mandating full vaccination is a necessary health precaution to create a safe, healthy environment in our care sites for residents, staff, and visitors. Creating such an environment is a responsibility everyone who enters our sites share. We know that it is vital for residents, families, and visitors to maintain meaningful connections and will do all we can to support safe visitation.

**Effective December 1, 2021, upon arrival at our sites, everyone 12 years of age and older will be required to show either proof of full vaccination using the Alberta QR code or proof of a negative rapid antigen or PCR test taken in the 72 hours prior to the visit. People 18 and over will also be required to show photo identification. Children under 12 years old will be screened upon arrival.** Please note that rapid antigen and/or PCR tests must be obtained at your own expense.

Proof of vaccine means that you have received the two-dose series or, one dose in the case of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, and that you waited two weeks after receiving your final dose prior to visiting.

Please recognize that the staff who will be asking for your proof of vaccination and photo identification are part of our team. Please be kind and calm in your interactions. They must follow policy and cannot make exceptions. Please do not put them in a difficult situation. Rather, if you have concerns or questions, please direct them to your Site Administrator or to one of us.

Further communication regarding safe visitation will be sent to you by your Site Administrator in the coming days. The policy will be reviewed quarterly; we will communicate changes to you.

## Continuous masking

CMOH order 49-2021 indicated that staff and visitors must wear a mask at all times in common and private areas in supportive living and long-term care sites. A recent memo from Dr Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer of Health clarifies that masks may be temporarily removed while eating and/or drinking and must be put back on immediately once the meal and/or drink is

finished. Masks are a crucial way to prevent spread of COVID; please be sure to always wear a properly fitting mask.

## Outbreak definitions

The definition of what constitutes an outbreak has been updated:

- **COVID Outbreak**
  - When two or more residents and/or staff members have a confirmed positive COVID diagnosis within a 14-day period *and/or*
  - When a staff member has worked at the sites during the period of communicability *and/or*
  - The infection was likely acquired at work
- **Under Investigation**
  - When a single resident or staff is diagnosed with COVID and
  - The staff member did not work during the period of communicability and
  - The infection was not likely acquired at work

When sites are placed under investigation, only residents who experience symptoms will be tested for COVID; there will no longer be prevalence testing unless mandated by the Medical Officer of Health.

## Keep well

As the temperatures cool considerably in the coming weeks and we find ourselves inside more, please be sure to be extra cautious in your interactions and follow all public health protocols closely. We have been hearing the phrase “we’re in this together” since the start of the pandemic and it still holds true today, twenty months later. It is up to each of us to minimize spread of the virus to help keep our families, neighbours, and communities safe and healthy.

Please direct any concerns or questions to your Site Administrator or one of us. You can also email [admin@covenantcare.ca](mailto:admin@covenantcare.ca).

Please do all you can to stay well and be healthy.

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