

resident, staff, and family update

January 21, 2022

Dear residents, staff, and families,

The last few weeks seem to have sped by as we've been navigating this fifth COVID wave with the omicron variant. Seven of our nine centres are on outbreak, which means that at least two individuals have tested positive for COVID. A big, big thank you to our team who have been picking up extra shifts and doing all they can to ensure residents are cared for with compassion.

On Tuesday this week Dr Deena Hinshaw, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, issued a new order (CMOH 03-2022) that pertains to our sector with changes to PPE and isolation requirements. AHS also released new screening checklists for residents, visitors, staff, volunteers, and service providers. We've summarized the orders below. Please let us know if you have any questions about them.

Changes for residents

- Fully immunized residents who test positive for COVID must isolate for 10 days
- Partially or unvaccinated residents who test positive for COVID must isolate for 14 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
- Partially or unvaccinated residents who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID must isolate for 14 days regardless of whether the resident has any symptoms.
- Residents who return to the site after being away for more than 24 hours (e.g., a family visit) and who tested positive for COVID in the 21 days previous should not receive a rapid test to prevent the possibility of a false negative result; once the 21 day period is complete residents can receive rapid tests again.
- New residents or existing residents who have been in a hospital or other health care setting for more than 24 hours and who have tested positive for COVID in the previous 90 days no longer have to take a PCR test or be placed on contact/droplet precautions upon arrival to the site.

Changes for visitors

- Visitors must continue to wear a mask while visiting a loved one.
- Visitors must wear a well-fitted surgical/medical mask, well-fitted KN95 mask, or well-fitted N95 mask while in the building.
- Visitors who have tested positive for COVID and who have completed their isolation period (five days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer) cannot remove their mask for any purpose outside of their home, including to eat or drink, for five days.
- Visitors who have had close contact with someone with a probable or confirmed positive COVID diagnosis cannot visit the site for 14 days regardless of their vaccination status.

Changes for staff-

- Staff must continuously wear a well-fitted surgical/medical mask or a seal checked KN95 mask while on site.
- Staff must complete a point of care risk assessment prior to providing care and, if appropriate, don an N95 mask, eye protection, gown, and gloves.
- Staff who return to work after having tested positive for COVID and have completed their isolation period (five days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer) cannot remove their mask for any purpose for five days following their isolation; these individuals will have a separate location on-site for eating and drinking during shifts.
- Staff who have tested positive, recovered, and then are a close contact of a someone with a probable or confirmed COVID diagnosis are exempt from performing daily rapid antigen tests prior to their shift for a period of 21 days to prevent a false positive result; following the 21 day period, staff who are in close contact with someone with a probable or confirmed COVID diagnosis will be required to perform a rapid test prior to each shift for ten days.

Changes for volunteers

- Volunteers must continuously mask while on site with a well-fitted surgical/medical mask or well-fitted KN95 mask.
- Public health protocols apply to volunteers who test positive for COVID and/or who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

Stay safe

Please continue to do all you can to stay safe and healthy. Omicron, while generally milder than previous variants for those who have been immunized, is taking its toll on the health care system. Hospitalizations are steadily increasing and there are staffing challenges across the system.

Residents and families, please take an extra moment to thank the caregivers who do all they can to keep your loved ones safe and healthy. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

And to our dedicated team, our deep, deep gratitude for your caring attention to residents, your families, and each other.

As always, we will keep you informed as we hear of any further changes. Please direct any concerns or questions to your site administrator or one of us. You can also email admin@covenantcare.ca.

Take very good care.

Michelle Charlesworth
Resident Experience Director

Virginia Roth
Acting Resident Experience Director