

# Ministry updates COVID-19 Directive 3 for Long-term Care and Retirement Homes

## Update for York Region health care professionals as of May 22, 2020

On May 21, 2020, Ontario's Ministry of Health updated COVID-19 directives for long-term care and retirement homes. (LTCH/RH). The changes to this guidance can be found below.

### Admissions and Re-admissions

**Hospital transfers to LTCH:** Hospital transfers to LTCH can only be for re-admissions (the resident is returning to their home). These re-admissions cannot occur during an outbreak in the LTCH.

**Hospital transfers to RH:** Hospital transfers can occur to RH (not only re-admissions), but not during an outbreak in the RH.

**Negative test results for admissions/re-admissions:** For LTCH/RH not in an outbreak, all new admissions from the community to a LTCH/RH, new admissions to a RH from a hospital, and re-admissions from hospital to a LTCH home, must be tested for COVID-19 and receive negative results not more than 24 hours before entering/being transferred to the home.

**Droplet and Contact Precautions:** A negative result does not rule out the potential for incubating illness and all new and returning residents must remain in isolation under Droplet and Contact Precautions for a 14-day period following arrival, and the receiving home must have a plan to ensure this occurs.

**Removing masks for staff:** When staff are not in contact with residents or in resident areas during their breaks, staff may remove their surgical/procedure mask but remain two metres aware from other staff to prevent staff to staff transmission of COVID-19.

### Managing Essential Visitors

**Step #1 – Screen for Symptoms and Exposures:** The essential visitor must be actively screened on entry for symptoms and exposures for COVID-19, including temperature checks and not be admitted if they do not pass the screening.

**Step #4 – Where to Wear a Mask:** The essential visitor must wear a mask while in the LTCH/RH, including while visiting the resident that does not have COVID-19 in their room.

**Step #5 – Wear PPE around Suspect or Confirmed Residents:** For any essential visitor in contact with a resident who is suspect or confirmed with COVID-19, appropriate PPE should be worn in accordance with Directive #5 and Directive #1.

### Limiting Work Locations

Wherever possible, employers should work with contractors and volunteers to limit the number of work locations that contractors and volunteers are working at to minimize risk to residents of exposure to COVID-19. In addition, with respect to employees, LTCH employers must also comply with Ontario Regulation 146/20 and RH employers must also comply with Ontario Regulation 158/20 both made pursuant to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

### Receiving Test Results

**Receiving negative test results:** If the LTCH receives negative test results on the initial person who was tested and all other residents and/or staff



tested are also negative, the LTCH can immediately end the suspect outbreak assessment related steps.

**Receiving positive test results:** When only asymptomatic residents and/or staff with positive results are found as part of the enhanced surveillance testing initiative for all residents and staff, it may not be necessary to declare an outbreak. This should only be assessed and done in consultation with the local public health unit.

## **Ensure the LTC Home's COVID-19 Preparedness**

LTCH/RH, in consultation with their Joint Health and Safety Committees or Health and Safety Representatives, if any, must ensure measures are taken to prepare the home for a COVID-19 outbreak including: ensuring swab kits are available and plans are in place for taking specimens, ensuring sufficient PPE is available, ensuring appropriate stewardship and conservation of PPE is followed, training of staff on the use of PPE, reviewing appropriate directives for all residents, reviewing communications protocols, reviewing staffing schedules, reviewing internal activities to ensure social distancing and reviewing environmental cleaning protocols, develop policies to manage staff who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and must permit an organization completing an infection prevention and control (IPAC) assessment and report to share it with public health units, local public hospitals, LHINs, the Ministry of Long-Term Care in the case of LTCH and the Retirement Home Regulatory Authority in the case of RH, as may be required to respond to COVID-19 at the home.

## **For more information**

York Region Public Health will continue to provide health care professionals with the latest information on Ministry guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. If you have any questions about COVID-19, call our dedicated health professional COVID-19 line at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280** (8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, after hours call 905-953-6478). Continue to visit [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals), [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19) and [Ontario.ca/covid19](http://Ontario.ca/covid19) for up to date information on COVID-19.