



COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is COVID-19, and what are the symptoms for it?

COVID-19 is a virus that can cause respiratory illness in people ranging from a common cold to pneumonia. Common symptoms include mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

Who can I talk to if I think I have symptoms of COVID-19?

Both Alberta and British Columbia have released self-assessment tools. You can find them at the links below. If you think you have symptoms or have recently travelled, please complete the assessment and follow their direction.

Alberta: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>

British Columbia: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>

Are you limiting visitors and volunteers at your care homes, group homes or programs?

In light of increasing concerns about the spread of Coronavirus Disease (**COVID-19**), The Good Samaritan Society would like to assure residents, families and loved ones that we are taking appropriate measures to protect our residents, employees and volunteers. As such, we will be limiting visitors and volunteers to our care homes to essential only.

What is an essential visitor?

Alberta

The Government of Alberta announced on March 20, 2020 that effective immediately, stronger restrictions are being put in place for visitors to long-term and seniors care homes. Essential visitors must be restricted to a single individual who can be family, a friend, or a paid companion who provides care and companionship necessary for the well-being of the resident (physical and mental health). The resident or their guardian must select each designated essential visitor, and every visitor **MUST** undergo a health screening.

Exceptions to the essential visitor rules will be made for family members to visit a person who is dying, so long as only one visitor enters the care home at a time.

British Columbia

Interior Health

Essential visits includes compassionate visits for end-of-life care and visits that support care plans for residents based on resident and family needs. For example, families who routinely visit to assist with feeding or mobility. Essential visitors are limited to two at a time and must go through screening before entering the care home.

Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health

Essential visits are only for compassionate care (someone is actively dying) purposes and is limited to one person. All essential visitors must go through screening before entering the care home.

What are essential Volunteers?

At this time, in both Alberta and British Columbia, we will only be allowing essential volunteers into our care/group homes. The definition of an essential volunteer is someone who is a currently registered volunteer who will provide compassionate care (end of life and critical illness). As well, essential volunteers can also undertake tasks that are considered paramount to resident/individual care and well-being, such as assistance with feeding or mobility.

Essential volunteers still need to be screened upon arrival. In the event of an outbreak, no volunteers will be allowed at the care home.

What sort of screening protocols are in place for visitors?

We have implemented screening protocols for anyone coming into the care homes. The following risk assessment tool will be used for all essential visitors, essential volunteers, contractors and physicians. The full questionnaire is available at <https://gss.org/visitation-protocols/>

		CIRCLE ONE	
1.	Do you have any of the below symptoms:		
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of breath/breathing difficulties	YES	NO
	• Rash		
	• Loose bowels		
	• Other symptoms such as fatigue, sore throat, or feeling unwell	YES	NO
2.	Are you immunocompromised?	YES	NO
3.	Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?		
4.	Have you had close contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever?	YES	NO
5.	Have you been in contact in the last 14 days with someone that is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO
6.	Have you had laboratory exposure while working with specimens known to contain COVID-19?	YES	NO
7.	Are you on self-isolation for COVID-19?	YES	NO
8.	Are you being tested for COVID-19?	YES	NO
9.	Have you tested positive for COVID-19?	YES	NO

Are there other ways to get messages to my loved one if I am unable to visit?

Yes! We highly encourage you to send a message to your loved one in our care homes and group homes through our Well-Wishes tool on our website. Visit www.gss.org and find the well-wishes tab on the top menu or under the “contact” tab.

Well-wishes are hand delivered by employees to residents/clients in the afternoon. Messages received after 1 p.m., on weekends, or statutory holidays will be delivered the next business day.

Please note that this tool is only to be used for well-wishes; any other type of communication or messages (emails conducting personal business, containing questionable content, or solicitations) will not be delivered and will be deleted from the system.

Will recreation programming be continuing at the care homes and group homes?

We understand how important recreation is to those we care for. However, in the best interest of protecting them, we have limited recreation activities as follows:

- All external activities are cancelled.
- All recreation that is facilitated by an external person is postponed for the foreseeable future.
- All recreation will be conducted by Good Samaritan employees.
- Large groups will be broken into smaller ones for recreation activities.

Please note, that in the event of any influenza-like outbreak, all recreation would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

How is Good Samaritan preparing for COVID-19?

- We have several infection prevention control (IPC) persons on staff who are closely monitoring the situation and taking direction from public health and the regional health authorities.
- Our Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is currently active and is meeting extensively.
- All care homes and head office are conducting pandemic planning, including the following:
 - Various internal policies and procedures are in place if there is an outbreak, and all care homes/group homes have binders that guide them through our protocols.
 - All care homes have an infection control designate in place as well as an occupational health and safety committee.
 - Necessary staff are trained in how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and when to use it. PPE includes medical masks, protective eyewear and gowns.
 - We are in constant contact with our suppliers and are reviewing our inventories when it comes to PPE, non-perishable goods and medical supplies. We are working proactively to maintain a robust supply.

These are only a few of the ways that we are preparing. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the site manager or team leader at your care/group home.

What would Good Samaritan do if there was a case of COVID-19 at one of your locations?

We would follow our current outbreak protocols, which includes:

- Enhancing staffing where possible to assist with increased environmental cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces.
- Cancelling recreation group activities on a case-by-case basis.
- Limiting the movement of residents who are ill during the duration of their illness and placing precaution signs on their doors.
- Placing outbreak carts and signs outside all ill residents' rooms that are stocked with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Gloves, gowns, eyewear and masks would be worn when providing care to ill residents as determined by the point of care risk assessment and policy.
- A thorough, enhanced cleaning of the affected area would take place after an outbreak.

What can you do to help us prepare?

- Continue to practice good hand hygiene for yourself and residents/clients and avoid touching your face with unclean hands.
- Please stay home if you are unwell, to prevent the spread of ANY illness.
- If you have been travelling and feel unwell, please self-quarantine and contact public health (dial 811 in Alberta or British Columbia) and follow their direction.
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), please stay home and contact health link (811) for direction.
- Think of alternative ways to greet other people that doesn't involve shaking hands – this could include elbow bumps or waving.
- Utilize our “well-wishes” function on our website to send personal messages to your loved ones. www.gss.org.

How can you protect yourself and your loved ones?

To reduce the spread of **ANY** infectious illnesses, including COVID-19, you should follow the usual health precautions:

- Wash your hands when you are coming into and leaving the care home and the resident's room
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue or sleeve instead of your hands
- Avoid contact with people who are sick

- Please practice social distancing, which is a conscious effort to reduce close contact between people and hopefully stymie community transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Where can you find more information on COVID-19?

Alberta

Government of Alberta: www.alberta.ca/coronavirus

Alberta Health Services: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

Health Link: call 811

British Columbia

BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC): [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

BC Government: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/pandemic-influenza>

Health Link: call 811