

# Safe Visiting Practices

## Risk of Unknown Exposure Assessment Guidance



### Low Risk

To be considered at low risk of unknown exposure, all the following conditions must be met:

- Does not work or live in an area of high COVID-19 exposure (refer to **Risk designation of region**)
- Works from home
- Part of a small **cohort** (15 or less) who consistently practices physical distancing and masks when cannot maintain distance
- Not have had guests at home in the past 14 days
- Visits resident(s) in one site in a day
- Makes essential outings only
- Uses own vehicle
- Consistently maintains 2 metres of distance from those outside household in all activities
- Mask worn when cannot maintain physical distancing
- Consistent hand hygiene
- No interprovincial travel within the last 14 days

### Medium Risk

*There will be many variations that arise between the extremes of high and low risk of unknown exposure*

*Individuals must use their best judgement to determine risk of unknown exposure where neither low nor high is appropriate.*

### High Risk

To be considered at high risk of unknown exposure, any one or more of the following may be met:

- Works or lives in an area of high COVID-19 exposure (refer to **Risk designation of region**)
- Works outside home in settings where distancing is not consistently maintained and masking is not consistently used
- Worked at or visited a location with a declared COVID-19 outbreak in last 14 days
- Part of a large **cohort** (more than 15)
- Cohort inconsistently practices physical distancing and use of masks when cannot maintain distance
- Have had guests in home in last 14 days
- Visits resident(s) in multiple sites in one day
- Outings where contact with others outside household is likely
- Use of public transit or carpooling where distancing is not consistently maintained and masking is not consistently used
- Does not maintain physical distancing and does not wear a mask
- Infrequent or inconsistent hand hygiene
- Interprovincial travel within the past 14 days

## Hand Hygiene

- All persons visiting, including residents, must wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an [alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) (greater than 60% alcohol content) before, during as appropriate, and after all visits.
  - An operator may require the visiting person to provide their own hand sanitizer.

## Use of PPE — General Practices

- All designated family/support persons and visitors are required to wear a mask continuously throughout their time indoors and be instructed how to put on and take off that mask and any other PPE that may be required. A mask may be provided by the operator, designated family/support persons or visitors.
  - Single-use masks may be removed (and immediately disposed of) for indoor visits in a resident room if physical distancing can be maintained. A new mask must be worn in transit through the site.
  - Public Health Guidelines for [use of masks](#) must be followed.
- Continuous use of a mask is not required for outdoor visits unless physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- When visiting a newly admitted resident or a resident on isolation precautions, operators must ensure that the designated family/support persons and/or visitors have or are provided with the required PPE (based on precaution required), have been trained to use, and have practiced the appropriate use of the PPE.

## Use of PPE to Enable Safe Physical Touch

- The risk of transmission of COVID-19 increases with close proximity. If a resident and their designated family/support person(s) or visitor(s) understand this and they wish to include physical touch in their visits, this may be done by following the additional guidance:
  - Continuously wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth while within 2 metres of the resident.
  - Though a resident does not need to also wear a mask, they may choose to do so based on their own risk of unknown exposure from off-site activity .
  - Perform hand hygiene (hand washing and/or use of alcohol based hand sanitizer) both before and after direct physical contact with the resident.
  - If resident is isolated due to symptoms of COVID-19:
    - Operators must ensure that the designated family/support persons and/or visitors have or are provided with the required PPE (based on precaution required), are trained, and have practiced the appropriate use of the PPE.

- Individuals at low risk of unknown exposure may engage in safe physical touch.
- Individuals at medium risk of unknown exposure may engage in safe physical touch, where resident risk tolerance is high.
- **Individuals at high risk of unknown exposure are not recommended to physically touch the resident** unless providing direct resident care wearing all appropriate PPE.
- Refer to [table on page 1](#) for guidance on risk of unknown exposure to COVID-19.

## Use of PPE for those with Cognitive/Sensory Impairments or Traumatic Experiences

- Residents who have sensory deficiencies or cognitive impairment must be supported to have safe and meaningful visits that support their health and wellbeing. This includes creative strategies to overcome barriers in situations where the use of PPE by the visiting person is inappropriate or disrupts communication, where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
  - For greater clarity, where use of PPE is disruptive, it is acceptable to remove the PPE if physical distancing can be maintained.
- Where the use of facial PPE (such as a face mask) by a designated family/support person or a visitor is distressing due to a cognitive or sensory impairment or traumatic experience, and physical distancing cannot be maintained, adaptation of facial PPE may be considered as described below:
  - Facial PPE must provide respiratory droplet source control (e.g. if face shields are being considered, they must provide protection that wraps under the chin).
  - Adaptations must be discussed/approved by the operator and facility medical director, if applicable, or zone [Medical Officers of Health](#) on a case-by-case basis.

## Visiting Animals

- Subject to precautions and ability of the operator to accommodate animals, one animal is permitted to accompany a staff member, designated family/support person or other visitor for both indoor and outdoor visits.
- The animal must meet the individual operator policy regarding animal visits, where established, and operators must require visiting animals to be well (i.e. not displaying signs of illness, such as diarrhea or vomiting) and not come from a household with individuals at high risk of unknown exposure to COVID-19.

## Gifts

- Designated family/support persons and visitors should be permitted to bring gifts, including homemade or purchased food or flowers/plants.
- Depending on the risk level of the individual, and at the discretion of the operator, some items may be required to be cleaned and disinfected by the individual or quarantined for a period of time (when disinfection is not possible).