

Questions to consider when moving a Family Member from a Care Setting during COVID-19

The decision to move a family member from a care setting to your home during a pandemic can be difficult and stressful. This information is not intended to replace the advice of your healthcare team. These questions will help guide a discussion with your family member's healthcare team so that you can make a well-informed decision prior to moving your family member.

COVID-19 Related

Speak with your care team to learn about any personal protective equipment or **isolation requirements** if you move your family member to your home.

- Is there a risk of transmitting the virus to your family member, yourself, or other members in your household? Visit [ahs.ca](https://www.ahs.ca) to take the self-assessment tool.
 - How well can your household control infection risk?
 - Are people in your home going to places where they may be at risk of infection?
 - Is your family member able to maintain the recommended hygiene practices of frequent handwashing?
 - Are you able to manage the necessary cleaning of household surfaces to reduce infection risk?
- What if your family member needs to, or wants to, return to the care facility during COVID-19?
 - Before taking your family member home, find out if your family member will be able to return to the facility during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Are you aware of the isolation/quarantine requirements? Further information is provided on the [Government of Alberta Congregate Care webpage](#).
- In your home, are you able to provide care with or without home care services?
 - During COVID-19, home care services may be limited. Local circumstances and resources vary. Speak with your care team to learn what home care services are available in your area.
 - If your family member needs healthcare supports beyond what is available, do you have the resources to hire additional private care? Is private care even available in your area?
- Have you considered how long you will be able to provide care in your home?

Environment & Equipment

- Is your family member able to use stairs and move around your home safely?
- Do your stairways have sturdy handrails (preferably one on each side)?

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- Does your family member need a hospital bed? This may not be available in all areas; please speak to your healthcare team. If so, you will need:
 - Twin sheets and blankets;
 - Access to an electrical outlet to operate the bed;
 - To move furniture and remove area rugs to make space for the bed prior to delivery;
 - To explore options, such as privacy screens, to provide for privacy when the bed is set up in common areas of the home; and
 - A side table or over bed table to keep medications, glasses and other supplies handy.
- Will your family member be able to go home in your vehicle? If they need medical transportation, speak with your care team to explore potential arrangements (e.g., stretcher, medical transport company).
- Does your family member need assistance to get into bed, onto a toilet, or into a shower? Please discuss with your care team how you can support your family member with mobility, lifts and transfers while at home.
 - Does your family member need a **commode** (a chair with wheels used to help a person go to the toilet due to illness or disability)? Are you able to manage incontinence or provide catheter care?
 - Does your family member require a **mechanical lift**?
 - Equipment with wheels needs to roll easily on a hard surface. You may need to consider the rooms you can use.

Emergency Medical Care / Goals of Care Designation

- Who will you call if your family member gets very sick, either with COVID-19 or their underlying health issues? Will they have access to the same doctor they had in the care facility?
- If the primary caregiver in your home becomes sick, do you have replacement care providers who can fill in?
- Do you know their Goal of Care Designation (GCD)? Do they have a Green Sleeve in case of an emergency? Talk to your care team if you do not know what this is.

Medications

- How will you access your family member's medications? Your care team will advise you about where and how to make arrangements for medications.
- Will you need instructions or support to give medications through different routes? For example, this may mean learning to give medication in a needle, helping your family member use an inhaler, apply and remove medication patches and give a suppository into the rectum.

Oxygen

- Does your family member require oxygen?
 - You will need to arrange for it to be available through a company when your family member comes home. Your care team may be able to help you set this up and teach you how to use it.

Wounds and Dressings

- Does your family member require wound care? If so, ask your care team for wound care instructions and how to get wound care supplies.

Nutrition

- Does your family member have difficulty swallowing food?
- Can you meet their unique food needs such as thickened or pureed foods, allergies and sensitivities?

Dementia & Memory

- If your family member has dementia, do you have a safety plan to keep them and others safe in your home?

Other Considerations

- It's important to consider the impact of a move on all family members who, even if they're not providing direct care, will take on new responsibilities. If you'll be making the decision to bring your family member into your home, has everyone in your family been informed in advance?
- What circumstances brought your family member into care in the beginning? Have those changed?
- There may be additional costs to providing care in your home. Are you able to plan for these additional costs?
- Are there other people in your home who require care such as young children, people with special needs or someone who is immune-compromised?
- Do you have someone to provide relief care while you take a rest or run errands?
- If the facility charges rent or accommodation fees you will need to continue paying these if your family member is planning on returning. In certain care settings, there may be a need for the facility to utilize your family member's room while they are on leave. If this situation occurs the care team will reach out to discuss.

End-of-Life Considerations

There are many factors caregivers need to consider if they are preparing for death in the home. Speak to your healthcare team, including palliative care services, to discuss what you will need to do to prepare yourself and your home to provide this specialized care.

General List of Care Supplies

These supplies differ based on the needs of your family member but may include:

- Incontinence supplies including 'attends', wipes
- extra face cloths and towels for washing and cleaning
- basin or large bowl for bed baths
- baby body wash or other gentle cleansers that don't harm the skin
- tissues and lotions
- shirts and nighties: you can cut the garment up the back with scissors up to the neck but not through the collar to accommodate care in bed
- mouth care: soft toothbrushes, club soda, swabs
- straws and non-spill cup
- garbage receptacle
- gloves to manage body fluids
- extra pillows (regular and small-sized) for repositioning
- baby monitor or bell so your family member can alert you

Information related to the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is evolving. For the latest updates and information, go to the AHS and Government of Alberta (GOA) websites:

AHS <https://albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

GOA <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx#p22780s6>