

Clients in continuing care represent some of the most vulnerable populations if exposed to COVID-19. This high level of risk does need to be balanced with the need to ensure a level of quality of life. The Chief Medical Officer of Health of Alberta announced updated safe visitor access guidelines for continuing care ([CMOH Order 16-2021](#)) that will impact visitation for Carewest clients and families. We ask that all visitors familiarize themselves with the processes and the Safe Visiting Practices before visiting.

Designated Family/Support Persons and Visitors:

All visits (indoor and outdoor designated spaces) must be pre-arranged with staff at the care centre by using the online booking tool or phoning front reception.

1. Health screening will be required for indoor visitors, upon entry to the building including temperature check for temperatures over 38°C and screening questionnaire;
2. Continuous masking for the duration of the visit with a medical-grade mask provided by the site while inside and, if physical distancing cannot be maintained, outside the care facility;
3. Wear an Approved Visitor nametag;
4. Observing appropriate physical distancing of 2 m between all other persons;
5. Adhere to all Infection Prevention & Control practices that are required and implemented, which include:
 - a. Sanitize hands upon entering the unit;
 - b. Sanitize hands before entering the room;
 - c. Sanitize hands after exiting the room;
 - d. Sanitize hands before leaving the care centre.
6. Follow all respiratory etiquette (cough/sneeze into your sleeve) and hand-hygiene procedures.
7. Time limits and visiting frequency to outdoor spaces or shared indoor visiting areas may apply, as the demand for these spaces fluctuates. We ask that visits in outdoor spaces, shared indoor visiting areas or semi-private resident rooms be no longer than an hour. If these spaces are too full to allow for appropriate physical distancing, you may go for a walk with your loved one. Please notify staff if it is your intention to leave Carewest property.

When you arrive:

- Please come 15 minutes early to allow for health screening and portering of your loved one to the space.
- When you arrive at the site for an indoor visit, the designated family/support person(s) and/or visitor(s) must come in for health screening and masking. If you are bringing an additional visitor(s) for outdoor visits, that person(s) must proceed directly to the outdoor visiting area and is not permitted to access the building. They must be wearing a mask.
- When you arrive to the screening station, please tell them your name, who you are there to visit and what area you will be visiting.
- Once you are in the space, please ensure you stay 2 metres apart from one another. If in a shared area (or a semi-private room), please be respectful of keeping your visit to one hour, as we'll need the space for the next visitors. Remain in the space for the duration of your visit.
- Anyone entering the building will be required to wear a mask at all times. Masking outdoors is necessary if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Outdoor visitors may bring their own masks.

Safe Visiting Practices

Risk of Unknown Exposure to COVID-19

- It is important for all persons to consider their risk of unknown exposure to COVID-19, based on their behaviour in the last 14 days, prior to entering the site and modify their behaviour accordingly.
 - It is imperative that active Health Assessment Screening is completed at entry, is answered completely and accurately, and anyone with symptoms or recent known exposure to COVID-19 not enter the site at all, **even if they have been vaccinated**.
 - Individuals should limit the number of different sites they enter and provide in-person visits to only one site per day to the greatest extent possible.
- Considerations when considering risk of unknown exposure include:
 - Personal vaccination status
 - Adherence to all provincial CMOH Orders and public health advice directed to all Albertans
 - Employment related risks (e.g., at home work is lower risk; in-person raises risk)
 - Transportation related risks (e.g., travelling on a bus or shared ride is higher risk)
 - Recent interprovincial travel (continues to not be recommended)

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.
 - Public Health Guidelines for use of masks must be followed.
- Continuous use of a mask is not required for outdoor social visits unless physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Use of eye protection is not required for visiting persons.
- When visiting 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 (e.g. hand holding, hugging), this may be done by following the additional guidance:
 - Stop close contact with the resident and inform staff immediately for further direction if any visiting person is or becomes symptomatic during the visit (or resident does).
 - 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.

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.
- Where use of PPE is disruptive, it is acceptable to remove the PPE if physical distancing can be maintained.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained, it is acceptable to use creative strategies to overcome barriers in situations where the use of PPE by the visiting person is inappropriate or disrupts communication.

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 local 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).

Health Assessment Screening

Active Health Assessment Screening for Designated Family/Support Persons and Visitors

Any designated family/support person or visitor who intends to enter a facility must be screened. This screening must be completed every time the individual enters the site. Persons who do not enter (i.e. outdoor visits) and follow all physical distancing during the outdoor visit are not required to be screened. Screening shall involve the following:

1. Temperature screening
2. COVID-19 Questionnaire (see **below**)
3. Confirmation of self-assessment of risk of unknown exposure to COVID-19 and understanding of *Safe Visiting Practices*
4. Confirmation of identity and designated status (only if entering the building)
5. Documentation of arrival and exit times, dates and contact information (only if entering the building)

You will be asked the following questions upon arrival:

1. Do you have any of the below symptoms:
 - Fever (**38.0°C** or higher)
 - Any **new** or **worsening** symptoms:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing
 - Runny nose
 - Sore throat
 - Chills
 - Painful swallowing
 - Nasal Congestion
 - Feeling unwell / Fatigued
 - Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea
 - Unexplained loss of appetite
 - Loss of sense of taste or smell
 - Muscle / Joint aches
 - Headache
 - Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)
2. Have you, travelled outside of Canada **in the last 14 days**?
3. Have you had close contact² with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
4. Have you had close contact with an individual who has any one of the first 5 symptoms on this list () fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat **AND** who is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

Visitors will also be asked to initial that they have reviewed the Safe Visiting Practices for the site and that they have assessed their personal risk of unknown exposure during their last two weeks of activity. Visitors will be asked to provide their contact information.