



Updated: November 23, 2020

Important Notice re Short Term and Temporary Absences

Short term and temporary absences are temporarily suspended related to increased COVID-19 activity in the local community and province. Absences for medical appointments or emergency room visits are permitted.

Short Term, Temporary and Medical Absences during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Residents, Family Members, Caregivers and Friends:

On October 14, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released an update to COVID-19 Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007.

Changes to the requirements and ability for residents of Long-Term Care Homes (LTCH) to leave for short term and temporary absences are in effect.

In addition, the provincial government has developed the *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open* to direct local Public Health Units on regional health measures and sector-specific public health and workplace safety measures to respond to local activity, transmission and surge capacity. Local Medical Officers of Health may implement additional restrictions or requirements based on COVID-19 activity levels in their respective regions.

The *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open* categorizes public health regions into five (5) levels: Prevent-Green, Protect-Yellow, Restrict-Orange, Control-Red, and Lockdown-Grey, being a measure of last and urgent resort. Measures and restrictions as they apply to resident absences from the care community are noted in each level. The full plan and details can be found at Ontario.ca ([here](#)).

Definitions

Short term absences are for social or other reasons that does not include an overnight stay. The care community will review and approve all short-term absences on an individual basis.

Short term absences include:

- Outdoor walks on or off the care community's property
- Social visits in the community
- Other personal reasons for leaving the care community

Temporary absences are for personal reasons and are for one or more nights. The care community will review and approve all temporary absences on an individual basis.

Medical absences are for medical reasons. Medical absences do not require approval or prearrangement. The care community will not deny a resident's request to leave the home for medical visits.

Medical absences include:

- Outpatient medical appointments
- Emergency room visits that take place over a single night (e.g. assessment and discharge from the emergency department spans one overnight period).

Requirements for each type of absence

Short Term Absences

If the local Public Health Unit is in the Restrict-Orange, Control-Red or Lockdown-Grey level, or the care community is in outbreak, resident absences from care communities are not permitted except for medical or compassionate reasons.

All requests for short term absences must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Care or Administrator.

All requests will be evaluated on an individual basis taking the following factors into consideration:

- Local disease transmission and activity.
- The risk associated with the planned activities that will be undertaken by the resident while out of the care community.
- The resident's ability to comply with local and provincial policies and bylaws.
- Any further direction provided by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC).

If the care community denies a request for a short term absence, the care community will communicate this to the resident and/or substitute decision maker (SDM) in writing and include the rationale for denial.

The care community reserves the right to reverse their decision if any of the factors outlined above change from time of approval to the time that the short term absence commences. The care community will communicate any change in decision to the resident and/or SDM in writing and include the rationale for the change in decision.

The Director of Care or Administrator will inform the RHA/neighbourhood where the resident resides of approval of short term absence and date that resident will be away from the care community.

Temporary Absences

If the local Public Health Unit is in the Restrict-Orange, Control-Red or Lockdown-Grey level, or the care community is in outbreak, resident absences from care communities are not permitted except for medical or compassionate reasons.

All requests for temporary absences must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Care or Administrator.

All requests will be evaluated on an individual basis taking the following factors into consideration:

- The care community's ability to support self-isolation for 14 days upon the resident's return.
- Local disease transmission and activity.
- The risk associated with the planned activities that will be undertaken by the resident while out of the care community.
- The resident's ability to comply with local and provincial policies and bylaws.
- Any further direction provided by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC).

If the care community denies a request for a temporary absence, the care community will communicate this to the resident and/or SDM in writing and include the rationale for denial.

The care community reserves the right to reverse their decision if any of the factors outlined above change from time of approval to the time that the temporary absence commences. The care community will communicate any change in decision to the resident and/or SDM in writing and include the rationale for the change in decision.

The Director of Care or Administrator will inform the RHA/neighbourhood where the resident resides of approval of temporary absence and dates that resident will be away from the care community.

Medical Absences

Medical absences do not require approval or prearrangement. The care community will not deny a resident's request to leave the home for medical visits.

If a resident is returning from an emergency room visit that takes place over two or more nights or is admitted to a hospital at any point, the care community will follow the requirements for readmissions under Directive #3.

Residents will be provided with a medical mask prior to leaving the LTCH. Residents will be required to practice physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and proper mask use (if tolerated) while on short stay or temporary absences. A reminder to be safe and stay true to your social circle.

Cover Your Cough



1. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose.



2. Put used tissue in the garbage.



3. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hands.



4. Wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol-based).

Stop the Spread of Germs

Always Cover Your Cough

- Covering your cough or sneeze can stop the spread of germs
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Keep your distance (more than 1 metre/3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing

TORONTO PublicHealth

416-338-7600

www.toronto.ca/health



World Health Organization

How to put on, use, take off and dispose of a mask

1



Before putting on a mask, wash hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

2



Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask
Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

3



Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks

4



To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; wash hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

How to handrub

Rub hands for 15 seconds



1 Apply 1 to 2 pumps of product to palms of dry hands.



2 Rub hands together, palm to palm.



3 Rub in between and around fingers.



4 Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.

Rub hands for 15 seconds



5 Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.



6 Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.



7 Rub hands until product is dry. Do not use paper towels.



8 Once dry, your hands are safe.



JUST CLEAN YOUR HANDS

For more information, please contact handhygiene@oahpp.ca or visit publichealthontario.ca/JCYH



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STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.

6 ft



cdc.gov/coronavirus

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