

July 22, 2020

Dear Residents and Families,

## RE: Changes to Visitor Restrictions - AgeCare's "Safe Access" Visitor Policy

An updated public health order will come into effect on Thursday July 23, 2020, following Dr. Hinshaw's consultation with residents, families, and facility operators.

The *Safe Visitation Policy* was written to accommodate a less restrictive visiting policy that balances the care community, residents, family and loved ones collectively mitigating risk. The policy is intended to help people remain socially and emotionally connected in a safe and measured approach – as congregate living residents remain uniquely vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19.

In keeping with AgeCare's mandate to strive for resident and family centered care; each AgeCare community identified residents and family members to participate in AgeCare's consultation of a revised *Safe Visitation Policy*. This consultation occurred over the last couple of days and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to those who participated. Please know that this consultation was for our initial launch of the policy and that more consultations will occur with the resident and family councils as we move forward in the coming weeks and months. We are continuously seeking feedback on these processes and would ask that if you have feedback that you provide through your regular channels at the site level.

The new *Safe Visitation Policy* provides guidance on 3 types of visiting including Indoor Visits, Outdoor Visits, and End of Life (Palliative) Visits. Please see the below summary for ease of reference on the types of visitation outlined in the recent order – along with options such as Community Walks and Virtual Visits.

### Indoor Visits

**Indoor Visit GUIDELINES**

**Indoor Visit**

- Reconciliation-makers can designate up to 2 adults over the age of 18 for indoor visits (family member, friend, companion, volunteer, support worker, cover of aboriginalist, agent, legal guardian, or other)
- If a designated visitor is unable to visit (e.g., self-isolation, out of town, or otherwise unable), reconciliation-makers may identify a temporary replacement.
- Indoor visits will not be supervised by AgeCare staff or volunteers.
- Visitors are permitted to bring one pet that is house trained, behaved, leashed, with no signs of illness, that do not come from households at high risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Visitors are permitted to bring homemade or purchased gifts. Depending on the visitor's risk level, some gifts may need to be cleared/identified by the visitor or quarantined for a period of time.

**Screening Process**

- All visitors must understand the [risk of exposure](#) to COVID-19 for themselves and residents and assess health before visit. When entering, visitors must provide their name and contact information, and follow safe visiting practices which include receiving a health assessment screening, having their temperature taken, completing proper hand hygiene, and bringing and wearing a mask.
- Visitors must notify AgeCare if any symptoms arise within 14 days of visiting with a resident. Entry may be refused if there is reason to believe an individual is not abiding by these responsibilities.
- Risk of COVID-19 transmission increases with physical touch. Visitors must practice safe physical touch and only while wearing masks and practicing hand hygiene. Stop close contact and inform staff if residents/visitors become symptomatic.

Updated July 22, 2020      As Per Order 22-2020

### Outdoor Visits

**Outdoor Visit GUIDELINES**

**Outdoor Visit**

- Scheduled outdoor visits have increased to groups of up to 5, including the resident, and can include visitors of all ages.
- Outdoor visits will not be supervised by AgeCare staff or volunteers.
- Visitors are permitted to bring one pet that is house trained, behaved, leashed, with no signs of illness, that do not come from households at high risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Visitors are permitted to bring homemade or purchased gifts. Depending on the visitor's risk level, some gifts may need to be cleared/identified by the visitor or quarantined for a period of time.

**Screening Process**

- All visitors must understand the [risk of exposure](#) to COVID-19 for themselves and residents and assess health before visit. When entering, visitors must provide their name and contact information, and follow safe visiting practices, which include receiving a health assessment screening, having their temperature taken, completing proper hand hygiene.
- Visitors must notify AgeCare if any symptoms arise within 14 days of visiting with a resident.
- Risk of COVID-19 transmission increases with physical touch. Visitors must practice safe physical touch and only while wearing masks and practicing hand hygiene. Stop close contact and inform staff if residents/visitors become symptomatic.

**Risk level for physical touch:**

- Low risk visitor may engage in safe physical touch with resident.
- Medium risk visitor may engage in safe physical touch if resident accepts the high risk.
- High risk physical touch is not recommended unless visitor is providing direct resident care and wearing PPE.

**Time**

- To ensure adequate physical distancing can be achieved, we are required to control the number of people in the community at a given time.
- Visitors must notify reception at least 24-hours before their visit to book a time slot. Alternatively, visitors are encouraged to set a standing time each week with reception, in which case they do not need to call beforehand.
- Indoor visits can occur at any time during reception hours to ensure someone is available to provide a health screening.

**Location**

- If the resident resides in a private room, visits will occur in the resident suite.
- If the resident is in a shared room with another resident, this will require an agreement between residents and families on whether they agree to the shared risk of visiting in the same room. If not, AgeCare will provide an alternate designated space for visiting.
- Designated visitation spaces must be booked in advance with the reception team as spaces will have a maximum capacity to allow for physical distancing.

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[Download the guide & checklist \(PDF\)](#)

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## End of Life Visits

**End of Life Visits GUIDELINES**

**End of Life Visits**

- Up to 3 visitors can attend end of life visits at one time for residents who are in their last 6-8 weeks, unless all visitors are from the same household, in which case there is no maximum.
- End of life visits will not be supervised by AgeCare staff or volunteers.
- For the Hospice program, these end of life visits start upon admission.
- Visitors are permitted to bring one pet that is house trained, leashed, vaccinated, with no signs of illness, that do not come from households at high risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Visitors are permitted to bring homemade or purchased gifts. Depending on the visitor's risk level, gifts may need to be disinfected/sterilized by the visitor or quarantined for a period of time.

**Screening Process**

- All visitors must understand the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for themselves and residents, and assess health before visits. When screening, visitors must provide their name and contact information, and follow safe visiting practices, which include: monitoring a health assessment, screening, having their temperature taken, completing proper hand hygiene, and bringing and wearing a mask.
- Visitors must notify AgeCare if any symptoms arise within 14 days of visiting with a resident. Entry may be refused if there is reason to believe an individual is not abiding by these responsibilities.
- Risk of COVID-19 transmission increases with physical touch. Visitors must practice safe physical touch and only utilize meeting tables and designated hand hygiene. Staff must contact and inform staff if residents/visitors become symptomatic.

**Risk level for physical touch:**


- Low risk visitor may engage in safe physical touch with resident.
- Medium risk visitor may engage in safe physical touch if resident accepts the high risk.
- High risk physical touch is not recommended unless visitor is providing direct resident care and wearing PPE.

**Time**

- To ensure adequate physical distancing can be achieved, we are required to control the number of people in the community at a given time.
- Visitors must notify reception at least 24 hours before their visit to book a time slot.
- Alternatively, visitors are encouraged to set a meeting time with reception, in which case they do not need to call beforehand.
- End of life visits can occur at any time during reception hours, to ensure someone is available to provide a health screening.

**Location**

- If the resident resides in a private room, visits will occur in the resident suite.
- If the resident is in a shared room with another resident, this will require an agreement between residents and families, or whether they agree to the shared risk of visiting in the shared room. If not, AgeCare will provide an alternate designated space for visiting.
- Designated visitation spaces must be booked in advance with the reception team so capacity will have a maximum capacity to allow for physical distancing.


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## Community Walks

**Community Walks GUIDELINES**

**Community Walks**

- Residents and visitors can take community walks that go beyond the property.
- These walks only need to be screened with AgeCare if the resident requires support to prepare for or be transported to the visit by a designated visitor who will be entering the building, or AgeCare staff.
- Community walks will not be supervised by AgeCare staff or volunteers.
- Residents must sign out of leaving the property and notify the care team.

**Screening Process**

- All visitors must understand the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for themselves and residents and assess health before visits.
- Visitors must notify AgeCare if any symptoms arise within 14 days of visiting with a resident. Entry may be refused if there is reason to believe an individual is not abiding by these responsibilities.
- Risk of COVID-19 transmission increases with physical touch. Visitors must practice safe physical touch and only utilize meeting tables and meeting hand hygiene. Staff must contact and inform staff if residents/visitors become symptomatic.

**Risk level for physical touch:**

- Low risk visitor may engage in safe physical touch with resident.
- Medium risk visitor may engage in safe physical touch if resident accepts the high risk.
- High risk physical touch is not recommended unless visitor is providing direct resident care and wearing PPE.

**Time**

- To ensure adequate physical distancing, we are required to control the number of people in the community at a given time.
- If the resident requires support to prepare for or be transported to the visit by a designated visitor or AgeCare staff, then visitors must notify reception at least 24 hours before their visit.
- Community walks can occur at anytime during reception hours to ensure someone is available to provide a health screening when the resident requires support if a designated visitor is entering the building to support the resident.

**Location**

- Community walks must occur beyond the property.

**Staying Safe**

- Please follow the "You, I, We, Safe From Tomorrow" One Minute of Learning.




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## Virtual Visits

**Virtual Visit GUIDELINES**

**Virtual Visits**


- AgeCare will continue to support with scheduled virtual visits, including Skype, Apple FaceTime, email, or social media, phone calls, and written letters.

**Time**

- To ensure everyone has the opportunity to schedule virtual visits with their loved ones, these sessions are all limited to 30 minutes.
- Virtual visits must be booked in advance by calling reception and asking to be transferred to the recreation department.

**Using Technology to Connect With Your Loved Ones**

- For information on how to use technology to connect with loved ones, please reference our [virtual visits poster](#).


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[Download the guide \(PDF\)](#)

\* If you wish to review AgeCare's entire *Safe Visitation Policy* you may view the policy here along with the appendices: <https://agecare.box.com/v/safe-visitation-w-appendices>

We are incredibly thankful for our current COVID-free status across our communities during this pandemic. The safety of our residents and staff would not have been possible without the support of every family member and loved one. We are committed to doing everything we can to ensure that the status of our sites continues and your loved ones remain safe.

**While the visitor policy has moved from "Restricted Access" towards a "Safe Access" policy, we urge all families and loved ones to use extreme caution, to assess their own risk of unknown exposure to COVID-19, and consider the impact that such visitations may have on those who live and work in our communities.** Our residents continue to be the most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 with the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and even death if they contract the virus.

For our larger buildings, opening up indoor visits could mean upwards of 600 visitors into just one community in a single day. We have identified maximum capacity within each community to allow some control over the number of people moving about the building to ensure our risk of COVID spread remains as low as possible. We also **strongly** encourage families and loved ones to continue to choose virtual and outdoor visitation options for a majority of their visits, so that we may limit the number of individuals coming into our buildings and **help keep our AgeCare communities COVID-19 free.**

Additionally, we encourage families and loved ones who choose to visit, to ensure they are doing [all that they can in their day-to-day to remain safe and healthy](#) to reduce the risk of bringing potential infection into our communities. This continues to be a time of much transition as we move forward with new visitation guidelines and we ask for your patience. We will learn over the coming days and weeks the effect increased visitation, while so important, must be balanced with safety for all residents and staff.



We wish to thank all our residents and families for their continued support during this transition. We remain committed to doing all we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and keep our residents and staff safe.

Sincerely,

The AgeCare Leadership Team