



Friday, February 26, 2021

Dear Residents and Families,

We remain committed to providing updates to our residents, families, and staff at AgeCare. As such, we are providing weekly updates to keep you all informed on what is happening at our communities and organization-wide.

1. [Post-Vaccination Safety](#) – Why we need to continue following public health guidelines.
2. [COVID-19 Variants](#) – Information from AgeCare Sagewood's Medical Director, Dr. Florence Obianyor
3. [Updated Vaccination Roll-out](#) – What you need to know about the vaccination roll-out.
4. [Visitation Guidelines](#) – Access all our visitation guides, including Indoor, Outdoor, Virtual Visits, and Community Walks/Outings.
5. [Recreation Calendars](#) - We know the need to stay active, intellectually stimulated, and socially connected never ends.
6. [Weekly Shout-Out](#) – Let's celebrate our Vaccine Champions!

We hope these weekly updates helpful. Thank you all for your continued support.

Sincerely,
AgeCare Communications

Post-Vaccination Safety

As we approach the one-year anniversary of living with COVID-19, it is understandable that many people may feel exhausted from following the rules and worrying about the well-being of their friends and family. It's no surprise that families are eager to return to "normal" when visiting with their loved ones now that most of our continuing care residents have received their two vaccine doses.

We want to take this opportunity to clarify why we can't return to how life was pre-pandemic just yet.

- **The vaccine is not 100% effective.** Unfortunately, we have seen in practice fully vaccinated people become infected with COVID-19. While this number is small, we cannot ignore that our residents remain the most at risk for poor outcomes should they contract COVID-19.
- **It is unknown if a vaccinated person can still transmit COVID-19.** Because both the vaccine and the virus are new, data is still being collected around how long the vaccine lasts and how it impacts spread. As of now, there is no data to show that a vaccinated person cannot still be a carrier. This means you and your loved ones who are not vaccinated could get sick.
- **Effectiveness on variant strains.** While early studies indicate that the current vaccine is effective against the three major known variants, there is still more information that needs to be confirmed. It simply is not worth the risk to assume the vaccine will protect against known and potential unknown variants.



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While these are the major concerns around relaxing your behaviour while visiting your loved ones, there are a variety of others not covered here. With so many unknowns, we must continue to be vigilant and mindful in our fight against COVID-19.

As the vaccination roll-out moves forward and more people become vaccinated, we hope to see provincial case counts continue to drop. It is only as our vaccination numbers increase and our case count decreases that we can look forward to loosening of restrictions. Until then, we ask that families continue to follow the provincial restrictions and public health measures.

COVID-19 Variants

A message from Dr. Florence Obianyor, Medical Director, AgeCare Sagewood

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), variants of the SARS-Cov-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) emerged in fall 2020 and are of global concern. Alberta Health has recently announced that all provincial laboratories are already testing for the COVID-19 variants.

The three common variants at this time are:

1. The UK variant (B.1.1.7.)
2. The South African variant (B.1.351)
3. The Brazil variant (P.1)

We know that coronavirus, like many viruses, changes frequently. This is how it randomly develops the ability to infect people and can suddenly become more infectious or more dangerous.

The UK variant has been detected in many countries, including Canada and the USA. This variant is concerning as it is more transmissible, which makes it more likely to have severe outcomes.

The South African and Brazil variants do not appear to have as many severe outcomes, but there are still many unknowns around these variants.

The main concern is that the vaccine might not be as effective or effective for these variants. We are cautiously optimistic that this is not the case, but given how easily these strains can spread, we must continue to act cautiously.

As we continue to navigate these unknowns, we ask that everyone continues to wear masks, practice good hand hygiene, social distance and follow all public health guidelines.

Updated Vaccination Roll-out

This week the [Alberta Government opened up COVID-19 vaccination appointments](#) to all Albertans aged 75 and older.



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Any Retirement Living resident who has not already received their first dose and was born in 1946 or earlier can now book their appointment to receive their vaccine. Please see below for some questions that were answered during Dr. Hinshaw's address today.

How do I book a vaccination?

There are two ways to book an appointment:

1. If you have Internet access, either on your desktop computer or through a handheld device, you can book online at www.ahs.ca/covidvaccine
2. Over the phone, by calling Health Link by dialing 811

Be advised: Alberta Health Services (AHS) is experiencing high volumes both online and through 911, which might mean a long wait before you are able to book.

Do I need to be 75 or older?

You need to be born in 1946 or earlier. If you are turning 75 this year, you can receive your vaccine.

Can someone else book it for me?

Family members who want to make an appointment on behalf of someone 75 or older who is eligible to receive the vaccine can help.

All that's needed is the Alberta Health Care number and birth date of the person being vaccinated. Appointments can be online www.ahs.ca/covidvaccine or by calling Health Link by dialing 811.

What times will vaccinations be available?

Appointments will be available 7 days a week between 8:20 AM and 3:40 PM at 58 sites and [participating pharmacies](#) across the province. As more doses arrive, these hours will be extended.

When you book your appointment, you will receive a confirmation of the date and location of both your 1st and 2nd dose appointments.

On the day of the appointment, make sure you bring your Alberta Health Care Card and Photo ID with your birth date.

I or my loved-one are currently in isolation/quarantine due to an outbreak at our site. How can I/they receive the vaccine?

If you or your loved one resides in a community where there is an active outbreak, please hold on booking an appointment at this time. Our leadership team will be looking into what the options are in this scenario.

What if I need transportation?

If transportation is an issue, AHS is encouraging friends and family to help. If you can't find transportation, please call 211, and they will assist.

What if I can't leave my home?

Several agencies in all zones throughout the province are working with AHS to come up with solutions as well, especially for those who can't leave their homes. More details will be shared on this in the coming days/ weeks.

I don't qualify yet, what about me?

The next phase could start in April, depending on vaccine availability.

It will include anyone aged 50 to 74, anyone with underlying high-risk health conditions, First Nations and Métis people aged 35 or older, eligible caregivers and residents and staff of congregate living settings. Congregate living settings include correctional facilities, homeless shelters and group homes.

We have seen firsthand the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage anyone eligible to get their book their appointment as soon as possible. **It is only through mass vaccination that we can consider our return to our pre-pandemic lives.**

Community Walks/Outings, Indoor, and Outdoor Visit Guides

As vaccinations across communities roll-out, there may be a temptation to relax your behaviour when visiting a family member. You and your loved ones are still at risk if proper visitation guidelines are not followed. We are on the right path and need to stay committed to following visitation rules for the next several months. **Download our [Community Walks/Outings, Indoor, and Outdoor Visit Guides \(PDFs\)](#) for details and booking hours to ensure a safe and stress-free visit.**

<h3>Community Walks GUIDELINES</h3> <p>Community Walks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents and visitors can take community walks that go beyond the property. These walks only need to be scheduled with AgeCare if the resident requires support to prepare for or be transported to the visit by a designated visitor or AgeCare staff. The visitor whose ability is required at least 30 minutes before their visit. Community walks will not be supervised by AgeCare staff or volunteers. Residents must wear face masks at all times, properly and notify the care team. <p>Screening Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All visitors must understand the list of symptoms associated with COVID-19 for themselves and anyone they will be visiting. 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 able to bring their symptoms. Heat of COVID-19 transmission increases with physical touch. Visitors must practice safe physical touch only with one-way hand and greeting. Hand hygiene, 6ft social distance and masks must be maintained throughout the visit. Risk level of physical touch for unknown exposure to COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure adequate physical distancing, we are required to control the number of people in the community at a given time. If no resident requires support to prepare for or be transported to the visit by a designated visitor or AgeCare staff, the visitor whose ability is required at least 30 minutes before their visit. Community walks can occur at anytime during reception. Hours of service hours are available in person or health screening when the resident returns to their unit if a designated visitor is entering the building to support the resident. <p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community walks must occur beyond the property. <p>Staying Safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please review the "Staying Safe in the Community" One Minute of Learning. 	<h3>Indoor Visit Education Materials</h3> <p>5 Minutes of Education</p> <p>Take 5 Minutes to Make Your Visit a Safe One</p> <p>To keep you and your loved one safe, please review these 4 educational videos before your visit. When signing in, visitors are required to acknowledge that they have reviewed education materials.</p> <p>If unable to review beforehand, follow these steps when arriving for visit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open camera on phone and hold device up to the code appears in newsletter Sign notification that appears on screen Watch all 4 videos then complete form and press submit  <p>Physical Distancing 1 minute video</p> <p>Masks, Donning & Doffing 3:30 minute video</p>   <p>Washing Hands with Soap & Water 1:25 minute video</p> <p>Washing Hands with Sanitizer 1 minute video</p>   <p>Hand Rubbing them using the WHO's HAND RUBBING STEPS Using the Hand Rubbing Organization (WHO) Technique</p>	<h3>Outdoor Visit GUIDELINES</h3> <p>Outdoor Visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, leashed, washed, with no signs of stress, that does not come from a household at high risk of exposure to COVID-19, and must adhere to appropriate when looking that they are bringing a pet. Visitors are permitted to bring homemade or purchased gifts. Depending on the visitor's risk level, some gifts may need to be disinfected/handled by the visitor or caregiver for a period of time. Visitors must complete proper hand hygiene, and bring and wear a mask. If in order to get to the designated outdoor visiting space, you need to go through the building, screening has to occur. Screened visitors must provide their name and contact information, and follow safe visiting practices, which include wearing a health assessment, screening, and having their temperature taken. <p>Risk level of physical touch for unknown exposure to COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure adequate physical distancing can be achieved, we are required to control the number of people in designated outdoor visiting spaces at a given time. Visitors must notify reception preferably 15 minutes in advance but at least 30 minutes 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. <p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor visits will continue to occur in designated outdoor spaces. Designated outdoor spaces will have a maximum capacity to allow for physical distancing.
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Virtual Visits

To ensure residents and family can stay connected, we continue to offer scheduled [virtual visits](#). Residents and families can book one virtual technology session per week. All virtual visits will continue as long as the site is staffed appropriately and care needs are met.

To book a virtual visit, contact your AgeCare community:

AgeCare Community	Phone Number	Email
Columbia	403-320-9363 ext. 511	vbohnert@agecare.ca
Glenmore	403-253-8806	BCGConnections@agecare.ca
Midnapore	Long Term Care 403-873-2612 Retirement Living 403-873-2828	twhite@agecare.ca ismith@agecare.ca
Orchard Manor	403-362 -6188	omrecreation@agecare.ca
Sagewood	403-361-8003	rhempel@agecare.ca
Seton	-	stroiano@agecare.ca or bburton@agecare.ca
SkyPointe	587-619-6317	mdukart@agecare.ca
Sunrise Gardens	403-794-2105	receptionsrg@agecare.ca
Valleyview	-	djesse@agecare.ca
Walden Heights	587-349-6055	whvirtualcalls@agecare.ca

Recreation Calendars

Our recreation team is working hard to create engaging activities that enrich the mind, body and spirit. We are continuously looking for ways to reduce the risk of transmission while having the least impact on resident well-being.

At this time, recreation activities will be held in individual neighbourhoods where possible and in larger spaces. This is to ensure that all participants can maintain physical distancing.

View the Recreation Calendars for your AgeCare Community:

- [AgeCare Columbia – March 2021](#)
- [AgeCare Midnapore – March 2021](#)
- [AgeCare Orchard Manor – March 2021](#)
- [AgeCare Sagewood – March 2021](#)
- [AgeCare Seton – Feb 2021](#)
- [AgeCare Sunrise Gardens – March 2021](#)



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Weekly Shout-Out

Let's hear it for our Vaccination Champions!

Each time an AgeCare Staff member is vaccinated, they become a Vaccination Champion. Each community has a Vaccine Champions board that keeps track of how many staff have received their COVID-19 vaccination. Staff receive a button to wear proudly and inspire others to become vaccinated when eligible.

We are so proud of our staff who have become Vaccine Champions!

