



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Information for Family Members of Long-Term Care Residents During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

March 26, 2020

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a viral illness with symptoms that are similar to the common cold and influenza. It is easily spread by droplets when persons infected with the COVID-19 virus sneeze or cough. It is also spread by droplets that are left behind on shared objects and commonly used surfaces.

The COVID-19 disease is particularly serious in seniors and can lead to pneumonia, respiratory failure, and in some cases death. Those who live in long-term care and assisted living homes or have other medical conditions are at highest risk of infection and severe illness.

What is being done to prepare and protect your loved ones?

Health authorities across British Columbia have undertaken extensive preparations in an effort to protect and care for their residents living in long term care and assisted living. To prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus they are also:

- increasing use of alternative methods of delivering care such as telephone or video for health care providers, who must travel between different facilities, to prevent spread of the COVID-19 virus
- limiting the number of visiting health care providers and support services providers to those who are essential to the health and wellbeing of residents
- implementing enhanced screening of health care providers, staff, and support services who enter a facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection
- restricting visitation to immediate family members and spiritual advisor of residents and loved ones who are clinically assessed to be at the end of their lives

Treatments available if we have a COVID-19 outbreak?

Like many other viral illnesses, the treatment for COVID-19 is symptomatic and supportive only. There is overwhelming consensus by clinicians that there is no benefit for residents to go to the hospital when they get COVID-19.

Given the level of frailty of persons living in long-term care and assisted living, there is more risk of infection from the COVID-19 virus in a hospital setting. As such, we will focus our efforts on symptomatic

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



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treatment and comfort measures for most illnesses including COVID-19 in the facility setting. There is no known cure for COVID-19 at this time.

The decision to transfer any resident to hospital will be made primarily by the physician in consultation with the clinical team after weighing the potential benefits versus the high risk of harm due to the current conditions created by COVID-19.

At this point, the evidence suggests that older and frail residents infected with the COVID-19 virus may become very sick and, potentially, pass away.

We appreciate that these are difficult times for our residents and families. If you have specific questions, please feel free to discuss these with the nursing staff, the physician caring for your relative or friend, the Director of Care, or the Medical Director of the facility.

Sincerely,

Regional Medical Directors of Long-Term Care & Assisted Living