

Visiting Your Loved One in Long-Term Care: What is Permitted in Phase 3

Updated June 30, 2021

COVID-19 has changed the way long-term care facilities accept visitors. It is important that you know who can visit and what is expected during the visit. The information below is based upon the Long-Term Care Directive which is found [here](#). Your facility will be able to provide additional details, for example about masking in each of the scenarios below. If you have any questions, please contact your long-term care facility.

Immunization/Vaccination

A person is considered fully immunized against COVID-19 when:

- They have received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine that is authorized as a two-dose schedule (such as Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), and it has been a minimum of 14 days since their second dose was administered, regardless of their age, or
- They have received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine that is authorized as a one-dose schedule (such as Johnson Janssen) and the dose was administered a minimum of 14 days previously, regardless of their age.

A person is considered partially immunized against COVID-19 when:

- They have received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine that is authorized as a two-dose schedule, and it has been a minimum of 14 days since their first dose was administered for those under 70 years of age, or a minimum of 21 days since their first dose was administered for those aged 70 years and older.

A person is considered not immunized if they have received no COVID-19 vaccine.

All residents, staff, Designated Caregivers, and Volunteers are strongly encouraged, but not required, to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Visitors may visit

All residents:

- All residents may have outdoor visits, without physical distancing. Residents are encouraged, but are not required, to wear a mask and physically distance. This means that residents and their visitor(s) may sit close, hug, touch, or exchange a kiss or handshake during an outdoor visit, if they wish. Visits must be scheduled with the facility ahead of time.
- Designated Caregivers and volunteers are able to attend.
- Residents may be visited indoors or outdoors by specialized workers such as a licenced hair stylist, lawyer, financial advisor, etc.
- Residents may get their hair done at the in-house salon.

In addition, for residents who are fully immunized:

- Indoor visits in designated visitation areas or in resident rooms are permitted, without physical distancing. Visits must be scheduled with the facility ahead of time. Residents are encouraged, but are not required, to wear a mask and physically distance from their visitor(s). This means that these residents may sit close, hug, touch, or exchange a kiss or handshake with their visitor(s) during an indoor visit, if they wish.

Designated Caregivers may visit

A Designated Caregiver is a special kind of visitor. A Designated Caregiver is a family member and/or support person who has been regularly involved in the resident's life, supporting their health and well-being prior to COVID-19. Designated Caregivers are considered essential. They are designated by the resident or their substitute decision maker and the facility. Some of the responsibilities of a Designated Caregiver are:

- Helping with movement, feeding, dressing and grooming
- Helping with communication
- Supporting a resident's mental health and emotional well-being, or
- Supporting a resident's participation in indoor/outdoor visits, walks, social activities, or going to off-site medical/dental appointments

A Designated Caregiver is permitted to have daily access to their loved one. They may visit with long-term care residents, regardless of where the Designated Caregiver is from within Nova Scotia.

Two Designated Caregivers may visit a resident at the same time, regardless of the immunization status of the resident. One or two Designated Caregivers may take a resident for a sightseeing drive, go to a drive-through, and stop and go for a walk at a boardwalk or park, although they must not come into contact with other people.

Immunization is recommended for Designated Caregivers, but is not a requirement in order to visit and provide caregiving support.

How residents may access the community

Residents, regardless of their immunization status, may leave their facility for:

- An outing to outdoor public areas such as boardwalks, parks, etc. The resident must maintain physical distancing (except with the person accompanying them) and is not permitted to come into contact with other people during the outing.
- A walk off the grounds of the facility (locally, in the facility's neighborhood) with a family member, friend or Designated Caregiver(s), or independently, if the resident and facility agree that it is safe. The resident must maintain physical distancing (except with the person accompanying them on their walk) and is not permitted to come into contact with others during the walk.
- Medical/dental appointments, with a family member, friend, or Designated Caregiver, or independently, if the resident and facility care team agree that it is safe.
- Sightseeing drives organized by the facility. Drive-throughs are permitted. The resident is not permitted to come into contact with others during the drive.
- Sightseeing drives with one or both of their Designated Caregivers (one resident at a time, drive-throughs are permitted). A stop at a boardwalk or park is permitted, although the resident is not permitted to come into contact with others.
- At this time, visits to family homes and overnight trips are not permitted.

In addition, for Nursing Home and Residential Care Facility residents who are fully immunized:

- Community access is now permitted, pending facility approval, with the support of another person, Designated Caregivers, or independently if agreed upon by resident and facility. This means residents can go to retail stores, restaurants, banks, and adult day programs, work and school.
- At this time, visits to family homes and overnight trips are not permitted.