

COVID-19 Recovery

Public Health and Infection Control Key Principles & Safety Plan For Family Gatherings in Long Term Care Settings

Updated: Dec 15, 2021

Please note that VCH is taking the necessary precautions to provide the best possible care in a safe environment for our residents, visitors, staff and medical staff. Everyone needing care, regardless of COVID-19 status, is welcomed at VCH.

Please follow Public Health guidelines and Infection Prevention & Control principles when preparing your area of work. For more information, please visit <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19> or the IPAC website at <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>.

This guidance document is only to be followed when there is NO outbreak in the home, in the event of an outbreak follow restrictions in accordance with advice **and direction from the local Medical Health Officer**.

Please note: amendments to this document will occur as COVID-19 recovery phases evolve.

Name of Facility:	
Address:	
Date of Creation / Last Review:	

To create your COVID-19 Key Principles & Safety Plan, please follow the instructions below:

- Review each of the element in this document with a JOHSC member/safety representative or if not available with a frontline staff member.
- Within the coloured box mark **“Y”** if the facility/department/program plan to implement the recommendation and N/A if not applicable. Complete any check boxes or blank fields as required. Provide brief comments to describe the implementation at your site. *You may refer to other documents with more detail where applicable.*

Examples:

Facility Staff/Medical Staff/Volunteers should be encouraged to clean and disinfect their own work space following the IPAC Guidelines .	Y
Facility Staff/Medical Staff/Volunteers should be encouraged to clean and disinfect their own work space following the IPAC Guidelines .	N/A

- Communicate your safety plan to your team and post in an area that is easily accessible. **The safety plan must be posted as per the PHO order (i.e. on the OHS Board).**
- For owned and operated VCH/PHC sites, a copy of the completed Key Principles & Safety Plan must be sent to EmployeeSafety@vch.ca to retain as a record.

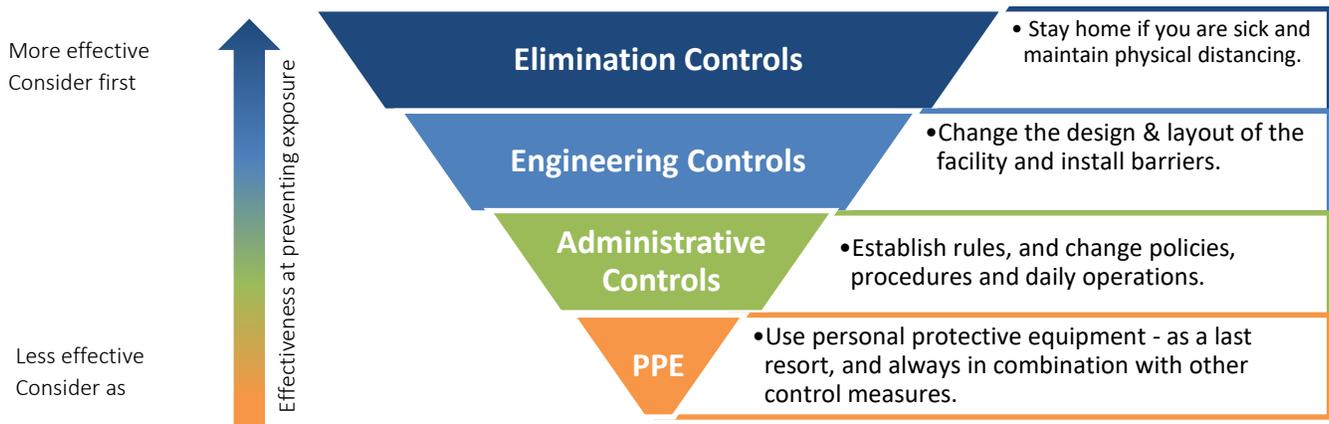
Quick Reference:

1. **General Considerations to Support Family Gatherings**
2. **Gathering Space**
3. **Family/Visitors**
4. **Food Service**

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols to keep workers safe. Consider the elements below as you develop the plan for your workplace.

These elements are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.

The elements have been divided into leveled measures of precautions each having an increasing level of effectiveness. Please refer to the color legend below:



1. General Considerations to Support Family Gatherings	
Please note: Any Public Health Orders currently in place supersedes all recommendations below (to view orders, visit http://www.vch.ca/covid-19 and review all Long Term Care documents under “Orders.”)	
During an outbreak, family gatherings will not be permitted in Long-Term Care homes.	
The LTC Home may have gatherings of staff and residents together from different units but are not allowed to have visitors to these events.	
The LTC home must have adequate space to support a private family gathering.	
The LTC home must have an adequate staffing complement to facilitate a private family gatherings.	
LTC homes will support residents to leave for outings with no limitations beyond current public health guidance regarding indoor and outdoor gatherings.	
Families that have opted to take residents home to private residences should observe the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site leadership should inform families that private gatherings, occurring offsite should follow current public health orders for gatherings. • Site should inform families that individuals taking residents on outings or for overnight should be fully vaccinated, but proof of vaccination is not required to do so. • Prior to leaving and upon return to the care home, residents and accompanying family members must perform hand hygiene. • Upon return to the care home, perform in-person screening (including a temperature check) • Returning residents with no clear identified exposure to a known COVID-19 positive case <u>and</u> without signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are not required to undergo 14 days of isolation. 	
Gatherings should follow the VCH Best Practice Guidelines for decorations, costumes, food, celebrations and donations .	
Gatherings that occur off VCH property should follow Provincial Health Officer orders for Gatherings and Events .	
LTC homes should continue to follow the Ministry of Health COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control: Guidance for Long-Term Care and Seniors’ Assisted Living Settings and when supporting family gatherings.	
LTC homes should continue to follow the Ministry of Health – Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors’ Assisted Living when supporting family gatherings.	

2. Gathering Space	
The LTC home may allow smaller families to attend a meal with resident in dinning hall but shall be seated separately from other residents. The LTC home will decide on allowable numbers of visitors per resident in the dinning hall.	
The LTC home may provide a gathering space, such as a multi-purpose room or adequate safe space in the dinning area that can accommodate the family gathering.	
If a separate space is allocated by site leadership, then most recent public health guidance shall be followed. The space should comfortably respect personal space and provide enough seating for all attendees.	
Site leadership will define their own process for booking family gatherings within their care home.	
Site leadership must communicate to families the maximum allowable number of individuals they can accommodate in the alternate family gathering space.	

Site leadership should request in advance, the confirmed number of family/visitors that will be attending the gathering.	
In the event the number of individuals exceeds the original number of participants communicated with the care home, which exceeds the maximum occupancy limit determined by the LTC home, site leadership has the right to decline entry of the extra visitors.	
Furniture provided in the designated gathering space will be non-porous and easily cleaned and disinfected using a Health Canada approved cleaning/disinfecting product with a drug identification number (DIN) .	
The designated gathering space will be cleaned and disinfected before and after the family gathering (e.g. all horizontal surfaces, chairs, high touch points).	
Hand sanitizer, cleaning and disinfecting wipes and medical grade masks will be provided in the gathering space.	
Signage is posted within the space to remind families, residents and visitors to perform hand hygiene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon entry and exit to the room • Prior to eating • After using the washroom 	
A large garbage receptacle is placed in the room and emptied at the end of the event by site staff.	
Site leadership must make a washroom available for use during the family gathering. Site leadership must communicate to participants the location of the washroom and appropriate PPE to be worn (if the washroom is not located within the appointed gathering space).	
During the family event in a designated room, the door should remain closed.	

3. Family/Visitors	
All family and visitors attending the gathering, excluding children under 12 years of age, must be fully immunized against COVID-19 or have an approved medical exemption.	
Proof of vaccination is required at the time of entry to the LTC home.	
All individuals attending the planned family gathering will be required to undergo active screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival to the care home.	
The site must retain visitor logs of all individuals that attend the family gathering.	
Individuals that are found to be symptomatic for signs of COVID-19 will not be permitted entry to the family gathering.	
Site leadership should communicate to families and visitors that participants who feel unwell will not be permitted entry for the family gathering.	
Family members or visitors who develop symptoms during the family gathering must perform hand hygiene, don a mask, report their symptoms to care staff and leave the home immediately. Family members who are symptomatic should call 8-1-1, connect with their primary care provider and/or arrange for COVID-19 testing.	
Family members will be required to perform hand hygiene upon entry and exit from the site.	
Family members, including children over 5 years of age, will be required to don a medical mask while moving through the facility and in common areas.	
Medical masks may be removed in the appointed gathering space.	
Medical masks must be applied when family members leave the appointed gathering space to use the washroom.	

Throughout the visit, respiratory etiquette must be followed, including cover cough and sneeze and avoid touching the face, mouth, nose, eyes and masks.

4. Food Safety

Food may be brought into the site for the family gathering, and can not be shared with other residents in the LTC home

Food safety requirements should be followed.

Site leadership should provide family members with appropriate information on food safe practices, such as protecting foods from contamination, minimizing direct handling of food, preventing cross-contamination of foods and discarding food that may be contaminated with coughs or sneezes. Please see the [BCCDC website on food safety](#).

It is preferable that food is individually portioned.

If food is not individually portioned, **one** individual should be designated to serve food and beverages.

Site leadership in collaboration with the family will determine if dishes, cutlery, glassware and serving utensils will be provided by the facility or the family.

All participants should perform hand hygiene prior to accessing or consuming food or beverage.

Leftover food should be discarded or taken away by the family.

5. Other elements implemented (*as applicable*)