

December 16th, 2021

Dear Residents, Families and Team Members:

Yesterday public health along with RHRA released new restrictions and requirements for retirement homes. The following changes and updates will take effect by December 22nd, 2021.

Effective December 22, 2021, COVID-19 policies in retirement homes will be enhanced to keep all who live and work in retirement homes safe. The new temporary measures include:

- Requiring rapid antigen testing for staff, volunteers, contractors and essential caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, two times per week prior to entry into the home as part of enhanced active screening practices.
- Requiring rapid antigen testing for general visitors and support workers entering a retirement home, regardless of vaccination status.
- Strongly encouraging retirement homes to restrict general visitors to only those who are fully vaccinated and implementing additional requirements for essential visitors and general visitors who are not fully vaccinated when entering a retirement home.
- Limiting the number of visitors to 2 persons per resident and group sizes for social activities and events will be reduced at this time.
- Implementing additional testing and isolation requirements for residents when they return from an overnight absence.
- Instructing retirement homes to increase IPAC audits.

Testing

Currently our staff is being tested on site two times per week. At this time, it is up to the contractor, general visitors, support workers and essential caregivers to provide our screener with proof of a negative antigen test within 24 hours of entry into the property. At this time, we will not be conducting these tests for anyone who is not an employee of RLC.

As of Monday Dec 20th, You can pick up a self-swab from the front door, leave the building, do the swab in your car and show the screener the results before entering. We are trying to figure out how to facilitate this and it is subject to change. These tests will only be issued during our visitation hours.

PPE

Everyone entering the building except for residents must wear a **medical mask**. Cloth masks are not permitted by anyone except for a resident. A clean medical mask will be provided upon entry. We highly recommend that eye protection be worn.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitization

It is extremely important for everyone entering the building to continuously wash or sanitize your hands. There are many current studies that have pointed to increased spread of Omicron through improper handwashing and sanitization procedures.

Screening In

Equally important is, that all persons entering the building, screen in and out and answer all the questions truthfully. As a part of the screening process, we will ask all individuals coming into our facility to provide proof of vaccination. Those who are not vaccinated will not be permitted to enter the building.

Visitation

Although visitation outside of our property is not prohibited at this point, we ask all families that are gathering with one of our residents to remain vigilant during these gatherings and celebrations. We recommend, highly, that you only gather amongst individuals that have been vaccinated; and that a mask is worn for the duration of these outside visits.

All over-night guests are prohibited at this time unless requested by the staff for medical reasons. If a resident is out over night, they need to return with a negative PCR test within 24 hours of the negative result, or, isolate upon return for 14 days.

We ask that only 2 people visit one resident at a time.

Visiting hours will be 10:00am until 4:00pm; after this time the door will be locked, and all after hour visits need to be approved and booked with the nursing staff.

Activation

We are reducing the numbers who are eligible to attend our indoor activities. We are not permitting any guests to dine with us currently or attend any indoor activities.

Vaccination Boosters

Get your third dose/booster as soon as you are eligible

“Omicron is a very different variant,” says Dr. Miriam Klassen, Medical Officer of Health for Huron Perth. “Three doses of vaccine are needed to provide good protection. I encourage everyone to get a COVID-19 third/booster dose as soon as they are eligible. If someone is not vaccinated, they are at high risk of contracting Omicron in the next several weeks.”

Currently eligible groups for a third/booster dose include: adults aged 50 and over, healthcare workers, immunocompromised individuals and First Nation, Inuit and Métis adults and their non-Indigenous household members. Individuals can book an appointment if 168 days have passed since their second dose. A complete list of eligibility is provided at www.hpph.ca/thirddose. Use the dose calculator to find out the earliest date you can receive the third dose.

I am sorry this is happening to everyone so close to the holidays, I do hope everyone can stay safe and still have a very happy and enjoyable Christmas Season.

Please feel free to contact any of the management team or nursing staff with questions.

Kind Regards,

Annette

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