

INFECTION CONTROL	SECTION TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS
	SUBJECT Visitors during COVID-19 Pandemic

SUMMARY

Visitors are integral to the resident's life and are an important part of the resident care team. Accordingly, all visitors must be well informed about their role in the infection control process.

Rules for visits to the home continue to balance the need to protect against the risk of COVID-19, and support residents in receiving the care they need, including maintaining their emotional well-being.

Heritage Green will continue to protect the residents and staff from the risk of COVID-19, particularly as the residents are more susceptible to infection from COVID-19 than the general population due to their age and medical conditions.

PRINCIPLES

Safety ~ Heritage Green's approach to visiting will balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff & visitors and to ensure risks are mitigated.

Emotional Well-Being ~ Allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts of social isolation.

Equitable Access ~ All residents will be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

Flexibility ~ The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its staffing availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables that are taken into account when setting home-specific policies.

Equality ~ Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

GUIDELINES

Types of visitors

- **Essential visitors** are ~ Support worker, Caregiver
- **General visitor**
- **Visiting Hours for above visitors** ~ 8am-8pm.

A **support worker** is a type of essential visitor who is

- Visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home. Examples of support workers include physicians, nurse practitioners, maintenance workers or a person delivering food, provided they are not staff of the LTC home as defined in the LTCHA.

A **caregiver** is a type of essential visitor who is;

- Designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker; and
- Visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g. supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making).

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- Examples of caregivers include family members who provide meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions and translators

A **general visitor** is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:

- To provide non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by the home or the resident and/or their substitute decision maker; and/or
- For social reasons (e.g. family members or friends) that the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from direct care, including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection, and relational continuity.

Designating Care Givers

- The resident and or Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) will designate caregivers to the Home
- Caregivers must be 18 years of age
- A maximum of 2 caregivers may be designated per resident at a time. The designation needs to be made in writing to the home
- A resident and/or SDM may change a designation in response to a change in the; 1) resident’s care needs have changed that are reflected in the care plan or 2) availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (e.g illness) or permanent. The change in designation needs to be made in writing to the home.

Visiting Access to Heritage Green

Status	Essential Visitors	General Visitors
Home is NOT in Outbreak and, Resident is NOT Self-Isolating or Symptomatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits are permitted • A maximum of 2 caregivers per resident may visit at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits are permitted • A maximum of 2 general visitors per resident may visit at a time • General visitors younger than 14 years of age should be accompanied by an adult
Home IS in Outbreak or, Resident IS Self-Isolating or Symptomatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits are permitted • A maximum of 1 caregiver per resident may visit at a time • A caregiver may not visit any other resident or home for the next 14 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits are NOT permitted

During an outbreak and/or suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the local Public Health Unit will provide direction on visitors in the home, depending on the specific situation.

Place of visits

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Visits will take place either in the backyard or in the residents' room. Visits in common areas are restricted to resident use only. Walks in the hallway are not be permitted. If residents and families wish to walk they are welcome to walk on the property, maintaining physical distancing from others, or off property.

PPE

Essential Visitors	General Visitors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Green will provide surgical/procedure masks, gloves, gowns and eye protection (face shield or goggles) when a resident is on isolation or symptomatic At all other times visitors will wear a surgical/procedure mask If the home is unable to provide surgical/procedure masks, no designated visitors will be permitted into the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Green will provide surgical/procedure masks for indoor visits of general visitors If the home is unable to provide surgical/procedure masks, no designated visitors will be permitted into the home General visitors are responsible for bringing their own cloth mask or face covering for outdoor visits

Screening

Measures	Applicable To
Active screening on entry for symptoms and exposures for COVID-19, including temperature checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All types of visitors
Attest to not be experiencing any of the typical and atypical symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All types of visitors
Verbally attest to the home that they have tested negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks and not subsequently tested positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All visitors with the exception of Ministry Inspectors or visitors of critically ill or palliative residents
Verbally attest that, in the last 14 days, they have not visited another home in an outbreak or a resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers General visitors
Prior to visiting any resident for the first time after the COVID-19 Visiting Policy is released, and at least once every month thereafter, verbally attest to the home that they have read/re-read the home's visitor policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers General visitors

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Responding to Visitor Non-Adherence

Non-compliance with the homes’ policies could result in discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor.

Procedures for addressing non-adherence	Heritage Green may end a visit after repeated non-adherence	The decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor should be in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support visitors in understanding and adhering to the home’s visitor policy • Recognize visits as critical to supporting a resident’s care needs and emotional well-being • Consider the impact of discontinuing visits on the resident’s clinical and emotional well-being • Reflect and be proportionate to the severity of the non-adherence • Where the home has previously ended a visit by or temporarily prohibited a visitor, specify any education/training the visitor may need to complete before visiting the home again • Protect residents, staff and visitors in the home from the risk of COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home has explained the applicable requirement to the visitor • The visitor has been given sufficient time and resources to adhere to the requirement (e.g. there is sufficient space to physically distance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted • Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition • Clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before resuming visits (e.g. reviewing the home’s visitor policy, reviewing specific Public Health Ontario resources, etc.) • Be documented by the home

Education on IPAC & PPE

Visitors will follow Public Health Ontario guidance, and will attest prior to visiting any resident for the first time and at least monthly thereafter to Heritage Green’s IPAC & PPE policies.

The following videos will be viewed by the essential visitor prior to the first visit and monthly thereafter;

Guidance document entitled Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

- Video entitled Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment.
- Video entitled Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment.
- Video entitled How to Hand Wash.

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Public Health Ontario resources can be found at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/long-term-care-resources>.

Communication

The home will endeavour to communicate with residents and families about policies & procedures r/t COVID-19 which includes resumption of family visits.
Heritage Green may implement scheduling to manage visits by essential visitors who are not care givers and/or support workers. The home has the discretion to manage these visits as appropriate to balance the safety of the residents, visitors and staff with the needs of the home and its residents.