

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

December 23, 2020

INFORMATION ABOUT MEASURES THAT APPLY TO FAMILIES AND INFORMAL CAREGIVERS OF RESIDENTS OF A PRIVATE HOME FOR SENIORS, INCLUDING DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Due to the current epidemiological situation in Québec and to slow the spread of COVID-19, it is recommended to restrict access to a small number of caregivers and visitors for vulnerable residents living in private homes for seniors, at every level of alert.

These directives are based on a reference timeline between
December 17, 2020 and January 11, 2021, inclusively.
However, the measures could be extended beyond January 11, 2021, depending on how the epidemiological situation evolves.

The following infection prevention and control measures apply at all times in the above facilities:

- Two-metre physical distancing
- Hand-washing
- Availability of all required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Procedure masks worn at all times

The following informal caregiver and visitor definitions will make it easier to understand and implement instructions.

Informal caregiver:

Someone who regularly or occasionally supports a person in their close circle that is disabled either temporarily or permanently and with whom a family or non-family emotional relationship exists. In this case, **support is provided on a non-professional basis irrespective of age, living environment or type of disability (physical, psychological, psychosocial or other)** of the supported individual. This care can take various forms, such as help with personal hygiene, emotional support or coordinating care and services.

This means that close friends, immediate family members and informal caregivers need access to the care receiver's living environment.

More specifically, for the December 17, 2020 to January 11, 2021 holiday season and in orange and red alert levels at living environments with COVID-19 outbreaks, only those informal caregivers known to the owners of the private home for seniors and who are familiar with mandatory infection prevention and control measures, will be authorized to enter.

Visitor:

Someone who is not a member of the close or immediate family, does not fit the definition of an informal caregiver, and wishes to visit a resident. This could be an infrequent acquaintance of the resident who is not essential to that individual's physical and/or psychological well-being.

INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO VISITS BY INFORMAL CAREGIVERS TO PRIVATE HOMES FOR SENIORS DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Access by informal caregivers to private homes for seniors will vary on the basis of the alert level in the region where the facility is located. Alert levels are set for given areas on the basis of recommendations by public health authorities, who regularly review the status to take account of the factual epidemiological situation, transmission control and healthcare system capacity.

More information on your current alert level is available on the [Progressive regional alert and intervention system \(COVID-19\)](#) web page.

Over and above any applicable alert levels, additional measures may be taken when there is an outbreak at a private home for seniors, or when the recipient of care is in quarantine.

The maximum number of known informal caregivers at a given facility for a given patient is set in accordance with the following:

RPA (orange alert)

- **Access:** No more than 2 informal caregivers/family members **known to the owners of the home** in any 24-hour period
- **Outside gatherings:** Outside excursions are not permitted, because individuals over the age of 70 and those who have chronic diseases or whose immune system is weakened or impaired are more vulnerable to COVID-19. When they return, these individuals need to comply with a number of instructions, including **mandatory isolation in their rental unit for 7 days** to avoid contact with other residents. This means that meals must be taken in the rental unit, no participation in activities is permitted and essential orders from supermarkets and pharmacies are delivered to the rental unit. Only going out for essential medical appointments and walking outside the building is allowed, as long as there is no contact with other residents and/or the 2-metre physical distancing rule is followed.

RPA (red alert)

- **Access:** No more than 1 informal caregiver/family member **known to the owners of the home** in any 24-hour period
- **Outside gatherings:** Outside excursions are not permitted. However, singles may join a family bubble (always the same one). When they return, these individuals need to comply with a number of instructions, including **mandatory isolation in their rental unit for 7 days** to avoid contact with other residents. This means that meals must be taken in the rental unit, no participation in activities is permitted and essential orders from supermarkets and pharmacies are delivered to the rental unit. Only going out for essential medical appointments and walking outside the building is allowed, as long as there is no contact with other residents and/or the 2-metre physical distancing rule is followed.

1. General instructions

- Monitoring visitors to a private home for seniors requires criteria for exclusion based on COVID-19 symptoms. These criteria for exclusion are as follows:
 - Anyone infected by COVID-19 that had a positive test result or one confirmed by an epidemiological link and is not deemed to have recovered
 - Anyone who is suspected of being infected with COVID-19 due to compatible symptoms
 - Anyone who is symptomatic and waiting for a COVID-19 test result
 - Anyone who has been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
 - Anyone who has returned from a trip outside the country within the last 14 days
 - Anyone who has been instructed by public health authorities to self-isolate.

Anyone who fits any of the above criteria will be denied access.

Informal caregivers that do not obey the instructions despite having been fully informed and monitored for the use of infection prevention and control measures could be denied access to the home.

Relations between care recipients and their friends and family members should continue and even intensify during the holiday season, both virtually and by telephone.

Instructions for the general public during the holiday season amid the COVID-19 pandemic are available at the following web page: [COVID-19-related instructions for the holiday season](#).

Informal caregivers who enter a private home for seniors from December 17 to January 11 inclusively, must remain particularly vigilant and follow all instructions issued for the general population. This means avoiding all gatherings in orange zones.

Informal caregivers and visitors will be permitted entry to all [palliative and end-of-life facilities](#). Please refer to the current directives on the MSSS website at: https://msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/documents/coronavirus-2019-ncov/COVID-19-Directives_SPFV_2020-10-05.pdf.

2. Specific measures at orange and red alert levels for private homes for seniors where no outbreak has occurred

Informal caregivers:

- Appointments may be required by the private home to ease the reception, monitoring and prevention and control measure process, based on current directives.

- Orange alert level: Informal caregivers from another administrative region might be denied entry to the private home.
- Red alert: Only travel by informal caregivers between neighbouring areas at the same alert level will be allowed entry.

Residents at homes in orange and red alert areas:

- Singles may join one family bubble (always the same one) except for residents in a medical-care unit.
- Dining room meals will be authorized only if infection prevention and control measures are rigorously implemented, including the 2-metre physical distancing rule between residents. If this is not the case, meals should be taken in the resident's rental unit.
- Only activities aimed at preventing muscle atrophy are allowed and only subject to the implementation of strict infection prevention and control measures are in force, including the 2-metre physical distancing rule between residents and when objects are not shared.

3. Specific measures in private homes for seniors where there exists an outbreak or a quarantined resident

- Informal caregivers can continue to access the facility, subject to specific conditions that are issued.

4. Informal caregivers must comply with the following instructions

4.1. Isolation, symptoms monitoring and screening:

- You are required to self-monitor for symptoms. If even the lowest level of symptoms is observed, do not enter a private home for seniors (See the list of symptoms in the appendix).
- If you are in isolation or meet any the exclusion criteria shown above, you cannot enter a private home for seniors.
- If you screened positive for COVID-19, you can only enter private home for seniors once you are deemed to have recovered based on recognized and confirmed public health criteria.
- Informal caregivers and visitors may request a screening test. However, the private home for seniors cannot require them to receive a negative screening test result in order to access the home.

4.2. Infection prevention and control measures:

- You must sign the visitors' register to enable public health authorities to contact you in case of an outbreak and to self-isolate if this is needed.
- Take note of all available information on symptoms monitoring, hand-washing, breathing etiquette and the use of personal protective equipment ([PPE](#)).
- Wash your hands when entering and leaving a private home for seniors as well as when entering and leaving the resident's rental unit and the hot zone, if any.
- Correctly wear a procedure mask or face covering inside the private home for seniors during the entire visit. Procedure masks can only be used once.

- Use personal protective equipment appropriately and in compliance with instructions.
- Abide by the 2-metre physical distancing rule at all times inside the care receiver's rental unit and everywhere else in the private home for seniors.
- Arrive in clean clothes. Change your clothes upon returning home and wash them regularly.

4.3. Moving around in a private home for seniors:

- At all times, comply with the two-metre distancing rule between yourself and all residents, staff and other caregivers.
- Do not enter equipment storerooms.
- Leave the rental unit whenever medical procedures that generate aerosols take place, and follow staff instructions for going back inside.
- Ask which bathrooms have been assigned to caregivers and what mandatory precautions and sanitary instructions are in effect. As an example, using hot zone bathrooms is not recommended.

The following Québec.ca web page is meant for informal caregivers: [Informal and family caregivers and visitors to facilities during the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

It provides a lot of information, short videos and references to support you in your role, help you to better understand and remember the important hygienic measures that you must comply with during visits and answer some of your queries.

Are you dissatisfied or disagree with the interpretation and implementation of ministerial directives?

- A manager or other designated individual at a private home for seniors is in charge of answering questions and dealing with caregiver dissatisfaction with the interpretation or implementation of ministerial directives. We encourage you to learn the identity of that person.
- If your dissatisfaction or disagreement persists, you have the right to confidentially contact the Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner per the facility's complaints review procedure.

USEFUL REFERENCES

Informal caregivers

- [Informal and family caregivers and visitors to facilities during the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)
- [Answers to questions about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Caregiver Support](#): 1-855 852-7784 or info-aidant@lappui.org

APPENDIX 1: Symptoms self-monitoring grid

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

☐ Asymptomatic

Symptoms associated with a COVID-19 episode			
Recent onset or worsening of chronic cough	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 100.4°F ; seniors: $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 100°F)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Sudden loss of smell (anosmia) without nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste (ageusia)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Difficulty breathing, out-of-breath or difficulty speaking	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Intense fatigue and major loss of appetite	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Feverishness/shivering (temperature not taken)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Sore throat	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Headache	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Generalized weakness	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Muscular, chest, stomach and other pain	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Irritability/confusion	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Diarrhea	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know
Other (Please state) _____			