

# Moving to long-term care during the COVID-19 pandemic

We understand that you may have questions and concerns about COVID-19 (coronavirus) and moving to long-term care during the pandemic. This fact sheet is intended to help answer some questions you and your caregivers may have. If you have additional questions, please contact your Nova Scotia Health Care Coordinator or call (toll-free) 1-800-225-7225.

We are working with the government and long-term care homes to ensure people receive the care they need safely. We are doing everything we can to make sure your care needs are met, including supporting you when you move to long-term care or while you wait to move.

Depending on your care needs and when a bed becomes available at your preferred long-term care home, you may wait longer during the pandemic. Your name will stay on the wait list and we will keep you informed as the situation changes. If your health needs or situation changes while you are waiting, please contact your Care Coordinator or call (toll-free) 1-800-225-7225.

## What are long-term care homes doing to protect residents?

All long-term care homes have people trained in infection prevention and control, including specific practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19. People who work in long-term care facilities, people who live in long-term care and their designated caregivers are also prioritized in Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization plan. All long-term care homes continue to follow Public Health direction. For example, staff within all homes are:

- wearing masks
- staying at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from other people (social distancing) unless required for care
- being screened for symptoms before every shift
- regularly monitoring all residents for symptoms
- arranging for testing of long-term care residents and staff as needed or as directed by Public Health
- limiting visitors according to Public Health direction
- reducing the size of gatherings in the home according to Public Health direction
- completing a point of care risk assessment every time they interact with residents to provide care
- regularly cleaning surfaces, equipment, etc.

## What can I expect when I move to long-term care during the pandemic?

There are a few new steps to the process of moving to a long-term care home during the pandemic. For example, to ensure your safety and the safety of other residents and staff:

- You will be required to be tested for COVID-19 before you can move into the home. The testing will be arranged for you.
- When you first move to the home, you may need to stay in a separate room and not interact with others in the home for 14 days. You will still receive all the care you need. After 14 days, you will move to your regular bed if you don't have any symptoms.
- Your ability to have visitors may be limited. Check with the home before the day you move in to confirm who you will be able to have with you. We appreciate the important role of family caregivers in supporting this transition as well as for your ongoing care and well-being.
- Before you move in, check with the home about their COVID-19 pandemic procedures.

## What can I do to stay safe while I am waiting?

Working together, we can keep each other and our communities healthy and safe. We can all help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by taking a few simple but important steps:

- Limit the number of people you have close contact with.
- Stay at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from other people.
- Wear a mask when you cannot stay 2 meters away from other people.
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand rub often.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow, then clean your hands.
- Clean surfaces that you touch often.
- If you have symptoms, keep your distance from others, stay in your home, and call 811.
- Get vaccinated when you have the opportunity.

It is important that you and your family stay informed. Reliable sources for information include:

- Government of Nova Scotia: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>
- Government of Canada: <https://canada.ca/coronavirus> Phone (toll-free): 1-833-784-4397
- Nova Scotia Health: <http://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirus>

Caregivers can get additional information and resources here:

- Caregivers Nova Scotia <https://www.caregiversns.org/resources/>
- Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia <https://alzheimer.ca/ns/en>
- 211 Nova Scotia <https://ns.211.ca/>
- Government of Canada: Resources for seniors and their caregivers <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/resources-older-adults-caregivers.html>

**We are committed to ensuring you receive the care that you need. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we come together as a community to respond to COVID-19.**