

## Frequently asked questions - visiting my loved one

Some homes started outdoor visits for families before the change in government directive was implemented. All homes have attempted to work through the many elements that need to be in place to make the outdoor visits a success: a safe space, resident psycho-social needs, scheduling of the visits, pre-visit screening, staff to support transporting residents to/from their neighbourhoods, facilitation for the visits, and cleaning and disinfecting of the space. All of these considerations (and more) will need to be made as homes increase how many visits we can schedule for residents and families.

Knowing how stressful this has been on all of us, thank you for your patience as we work to increase the capacity so that families can visit loved ones. Further to this, on behalf of our staff, we ask that you speak to staff respectfully. Our team has been working extremely hard to help ensure your loved ones are safe and cared for and we all need to remember to be kind to one another during this frustrating and challenging time.

Below are some of the questions we have been receiving from families. We hope these answers help provide clarity.

### **1. Why is the testing only every 2 weeks? Couldn't I be exposed to COVID-19 during that time?**

*The testing being requested to be done only every 2 weeks is the current direction from the Ministry of Health. This is being done, within our current means and resources, to do what we can to allow safe visits between residents and families. We realize that this also causes some challenges if those visitors are exposed to COVID-19 between their tests. We ask that anyone who is visiting a loved one be diligent with precautions in between testing and visits to ensure the lowest possible risk of contracting COVID-19. This includes hand hygiene, wearing masks and caring for them properly, and limiting contact with anyone who may be ill or a higher risk of transferring COVID-19. There is no test that can tell us if a person has COVID at the time of the visit – getting tested frequently is our best option to create the safest possible environment for our residents as we open to visitors.*

### **2. Why do I now have to be tested when I have been visiting from a distance outside before this**

*It is recognized that different homes have been testing different visiting strategies prior to these new rules. While these rules are new and outside of an individual home's control, we appreciate your understanding and patience as we work to respond to these rules while supporting the wellbeing of your families to be able to visit.*

### **3. If outside, and socially distanced, why do I need a mask?**

*While physical distancing and being outside are good measures to decrease spread, we also acknowledge that accidental lapses in distance can happen, and it only takes one accidental transmission to spread COVID-19.*

#### **4. Are the rules going to change again?**

*As with everything during this time, we are learning new things about COVID-19 every day and working to respond appropriately. We thank you and your families for being patient, kind and understanding as we work to make your visits possible.*

#### **5. Should I just go get tested then so I am ready for my visit?**

*You should check with your home. Some facilities are asking family members to wait until their visit is booked before going for testing to ensure that it is within the recommended window.*

#### **6. How do I get my test results?**

*If you have an Ontario health card, you can check their results online. You can then print to take a picture/screen shot of your on-line result to show your results to the home before visiting. Some homes only require an attestation that you have received a negative test – check with your home for direction.*

#### **7. Can I bring a mask to my visit?**

Each home has different requirements regarding masks. Please check with your home.

#### **8. Why didn't I need a COVID-19 negative test result before?**

St. Joseph's was prepared to start outdoor visits before the change in Ministry direction. We put safety protocols in place, such as the transparent screen, to help protect residents.

The Ministry's directive requires that visitors have a COVID-19 negative test result to visit loved ones in long-term care and we are making this a requirement for visits scheduled after June 23 so we meet this safety requirement of the directive.

#### **9. I've had one in person visit with my loved one. What's holding up a second in person visit?**

Not all families have had an opportunity to visit with their loved one yet and we want to ensure we are scheduling visits equitably. We ask for your patience as we work to increase the number of visits, so families are able to visit with their loved ones more often.

#### **10. Will I be able to visit my loved every week?**

We are aware of the government's goal for families to visit their loved one in long-term care weekly. It is our goal to have families visit once a week, but we may not be able to meet this visiting frequency yet. We are working through the logistics for setting up the space and staffing to support this.

#### **11. Can I bring a family pet to the visit?**

Each home is different – please check with your home

**12. How many people can visit at the same time?**

Each home can accommodate different numbers of visitors – please check with your home.

**13. Are children able to visit?**

Please check with your home.

**14. What other ways can I connect with my loved one at St. Joseph's?**

Some homes are supporting window and/or virtual visits with families and residents. Please check with your home.

**EXTERNAL LINKS**

Now more than ever, it is important to consult reliable and trustworthy sources to have accurate and updated information about COVID-19. We strongly recommend and encourage you to visit official links like the ones below to stay up-to-date on this rapidly evolving situation.

[Government of Ontario COVID-19 Website](#)

[Public Health Ontario](#)

[Government of Canada COVID-19 Website](#)

[Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health](#)