

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Screening Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes

Version 8 – January 11, 2022

This tool provides basic information only and contains recommendations for COVID-19 screening for entry into a Long-Term Care Home (LTCH) or Retirement Home (RH). It is not to be used as a clinical assessment tool or intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Where the document includes references to legal requirements, it is not to be construed as legal advice.

As per [Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007](#), all LTCHs and RHs must ensure that all individuals seeking entry are actively screened for symptoms and exposure history for COVID-19 before they are allowed to enter the home, regardless of their COVID-19 vaccination status. This includes all staff, students, visitors, and residents who are re-entering the LTCH's/RH's premises, including for outdoor visits.

At a minimum, the following questions should be asked to screen individuals for COVID-19 before entry. This tool can be adapted based on need and the specific setting but must include the minimum screening questions set out below. These questions can be adapted to meet the communication needs of people with learning, developmental or cognitive disabilities. The screening questions below are not intended to be used to screen admissions/transfers in the absence of other clinical and detailed admission assessments.

In emergency situations, emergency services or other first responders should be permitted entry without screening.

Anyone who does not pass screening should be informed of this result and should not be permitted to enter the home. They should be advised that they should self-isolate, ideally at home, and call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario ([1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000)) to get advice or an assessment, including if they need a COVID-19 test (if eligible). Exceptions to this include:

- A resident returning to their home, who must be admitted on entry but isolated on [Droplet and Contact Precautions](#) and tested for COVID-19 as per the [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#) and
- Visitors for residents receiving end of life care, who must be screened prior to entry. If they fail screening, they must be permitted entry, but homes must ensure that they wear a medical (surgical/procedural) mask, maintain physical distance from other residents and staff and be restricted to the resident's room. This exception does not apply to visitors for residents receiving end of life care who failed screening due to federal quarantine requirements.

Once an individual has passed the screening questions below and is able to enter the home, they must continue to follow all public health measures in the home, such as hand hygiene, physical distancing, and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) or masking, as required. They also should be advised to self-monitor while in the home and report any symptoms immediately.

Staff responsible for occupational health at the LTCH/RH must follow up on all staff (i.e., phone calls, further screening, etc.) who have not passed the screening and been advised to self-isolate based on symptoms and/or exposure risk.

Note:

[O. Reg 146/20](#) and [O. Reg 158/20](#) of the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#) (ROA) prohibit employees of LTCHs and RHs from working in more than one LTCH, RH, or health service provider (within the meaning of the [Connecting Care Act, 2019](#)).

These restrictions do not apply to employees who are fully vaccinated. As per the Ministry of Long-Term Care's (MLTC) [COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care homes in Ontario](#) effective December 30, 2021 or as current for LTCHs and the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority's (RHRA) [Retirement Home's Policy to Implement Directive #3](#), effective December 27, 2021 or as current for RHs, each home is now asked to:

- Collect COVID-19 vaccination status of their staff; and
- Maintain and update record of their staff who work in more than one LTCH, RH, or health care facility simultaneously.

For the purposes of this document, please refer to the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Fully Vaccinated Status in Ontario](#) document for the definition of "fully vaccinated" where applicable in this document.

Routine asymptomatic testing of all staff and visitors must be conducted prior to entry into a Long-Term Care Home (LTCH) or Retirement Home (RH). LTCHs must follow the requirements in the [Minister's Directive COVID-19: Long-Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes](#), effective December 17, 2021 or as current. RHs must follow the requirements in the [Letter of Instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health](#) effective December 24, 2021 or as current.

All LTCHs and RHs are responsible for ensuring compliance with the applicable regulation.

Required Screening Questions for All Persons

1. Are you currently experiencing one or more of the symptoms below that are new or worsening? Symptoms should not be chronic or related to other known causes or conditions.

Do you have one or more of the following symptoms?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Fever and/or chills	Temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius/100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
Cough or barking cough (croup)	Not related to asthma, post-infectious reactive airways, COPD, or other known causes or conditions you already have
Shortness of breath	Not related to asthma or other known causes or conditions you already have
Decrease or loss of smell or taste	Not related to seasonal allergies, neurological disorders, or other known causes or conditions you already have

Muscle aches/joint pain	<p>Unusual, long-lasting (not related to a sudden injury, fibromyalgia, or other known causes or conditions you already have)</p> <p><i>If you received a COVID-19 and/or flu vaccination in the last 48 hours and are experiencing mild muscle aches/joint pain that only began after vaccination, select "No."</i></p>
Fatigue	<p>Unusual tiredness, lack of energy (not related to depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, or other known causes or conditions you already have)</p> <p><i>If you received a COVID-19 and/or flu vaccination in the last 48 hours and are experiencing mild fatigue that only began after vaccination, select "No."</i></p>
Sore throat	<p>Painful or difficulty swallowing (not related to post-nasal drip, acid reflux, or other known causes or conditions you already have)</p>
Runny or stuffy/congested nose	<p>Not related to seasonal allergies, being outside in cold weather, or other known causes or conditions you already have</p>
Headache	<p>New, unusual, long-lasting (not related to tension-type headaches, chronic migraines, or other known causes or conditions you already have)</p> <p><i>If you received a COVID-19 and/or flu vaccination in the last 48 hours and are experiencing a headache that only began after vaccination, select "No."</i></p>
Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea	<p>Not related to irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety, menstrual cramps, or other known causes or conditions you already have</p>

2. In the last 14 days, have you travelled outside of Canada AND are currently required to be in quarantine per the [federal quarantine requirements](#)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Has a doctor, health care provider, or public health unit told you that you should currently be isolating (staying at home)?

This can be because of an outbreak or contact tracing. If the LTCH/RH you are seeking to enter allows you to work in self-isolation (e.g., test-to-work), select "No."

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. In the last 10 days (regardless of whether you are currently self-isolating or not), have you been identified as a "close contact" of someone (regardless of whether you live with them or not) who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

If public health or the LTCH/RH you are seeking to enter has advised you that you do not need to self-isolate or that you are allowed to work in self-isolation (e.g., test-to-work), select "No."

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. In the last 10 days, have you received a COVID Alert exposure notification on your cell phone?

If you have already gone for a lab-based PCR test and got a negative result, or if the LTCH/RH you are seeking to enter allows you to work in self-isolation (e.g., test-to-work), select "No."

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. In the last 10 days (regardless of whether you are currently self-isolating or not), have you tested positive for COVID-19 including on a rapid antigen test or a home-based self-testing kit?

If you have since tested negative on a lab-based PCR test, or if the LTCH/RH you are seeking to enter allows to work in self-isolation (e.g., test-to-work), select "No."

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Is anyone you live with currently experiencing any new COVID-19 symptoms and/or waiting for test results after experiencing symptoms?

If public health or the LTCH/RH has advised you that you do not need to self-isolate or that you are allowed to work in self-isolation (e.g., test-to-work), select "No."

If the individual experiencing symptoms received a COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine in the last 48 hours and is experiencing mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain that only began after vaccination, select "No".

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. In the last 14 days, has someone in your household (someone you live with) travelled outside of Canada AND currently required to be in quarantine (as per the federal quarantine requirements)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Results of Screening Questions:

- If the individual answers **NO to all questions from 1 through 8**, they have passed and can enter the home. They need to wear a mask to enter the home and should be told to self-monitor for symptoms.
 - In addition to following all the home's regular control measures, if the individual is a worker (e.g., staff) who received a COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine in the last 48 hours and has mild headache, fatigue, muscle ache and/or joint pain that only began after vaccination, and no other symptoms, the worker must wear a medical mask for their entire shift at work even if not otherwise required to do so. Their mask may only be removed to consume food or drink and they must remain at least two metres away from others when their mask has been removed. If the symptoms worsen, continue past 48 hours, or if they develop other symptoms, they should leave work immediately to self-isolate and seek COVID-19 testing.
- If the individual answers **YES to ANY question from 1 through 8** they have not passed the screening and should not be permitted entry unless they are a resident or visiting a resident receiving end of life care as outlined above.

- Staff and students: They should inform their manager/immediate supervisor of this result. They should be told to go or stay at home to self-isolate immediately and contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) to get medical advice or an assessment, including if they need a COVID-19 test.
- Visitors: They should be told to go or stay at home to self-isolate immediately and contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) to get medical advice, including if they need a COVID-19 test.
- Residents: They should be placed in a separate room near the entrance to be further assessed by the appropriate LTCH/RH staff.
- If the individual answers **YES to question 7**, they must be advised to stay home and self-isolate, along with the rest of the household.
- If the individual answers **YES to question 8** because a member of their household (someone they live with) has recently traveled outside of Canada and have been [instructed to quarantine](#), they should not be permitted entry into the home until the traveler has completed their required quarantine period.
- If any of the answers to these screening questions change during the day, the individual should inform their employer of the change (where applicable), go home to self-isolate immediately, and contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) to get medical advice or an assessment, including if they need a COVID-19 test.
- Homes are required to maintain a record of the date/time that workers were in the home and their contact information. This information may be requested by public health for contact tracing. Homes are required to maintain visitor logs of all visits to the home. The visitor log must include, at minimum, the name and contact information of the visitor, time and date of the visit, and the purpose of the visit (e.g., name of resident visited). These records should be maintained for a period of at least 30 days.
- Any record created as part of worker screening may only be disclosed as required by law.

Note:

For more information on federal requirements for travellers, including for unvaccinated children less than 12 years of age and quarantine exemptions, please see the Government of Canada's [website](#).