

## Protocols for Resident Short-Stay Absences – revised 10/06/2020

As per the CMOH Directive #3 (September 9, 2020) and Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) Retirement Home COVID-19 Visiting Policy (October 5, 2020) requirement for **education on all required protocols for absences (such as IPAC and PPE) to be provided by the residence**, this document will be shared with all residents.

Residents are permitted to leave the property for short absences within the parameters outlined in this document, provided all requirements are met.

### Introduction

Effective **October 13, 2020**, resident absences are permitted per the following:

#### **A: Absences That Do Not Include an Overnight Stay** (with exception of single- night emergency room visits)

Residents are permitted to leave the home for an absence that does not include an overnight stay (e.g., absences with friends or family, shopping, medical appointments, etc.) with the exception of single-night emergency room visits, if they meet the following requirements:

1. The residence must **not** be currently in an outbreak.
  - In the event the residence allows absences but enters into an outbreak, there should be a hold on starting new absences until the home is no longer in outbreak. Short absences for essentials (e.g. groceries, medical appointments, filling prescriptions) may be continued. The residence must establish compliance with all CMOH Directives for homes in outbreak and follow directions from the local PHU.
  - All outbreaks will be announced. Residents will be notified via letter and resident substitute decision makers will be notified via telephone. Signage within and outside of the residence will be posted.
2. Upon return to the residence, residents must be actively screened and monitored for symptoms but are not required to be tested or self-isolate.
3. Residents must wear a face covering/mask at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and are responsible for supplying their own face covering/mask while they are on absences. The residence may, **at its discretion**, opt to supply face coverings/masks for absences. Residents who have trouble obtaining one, may be provided with a face covering by request through reception or the Visitor Coordinator (based on availability). The resident must also be reminded about the importance of public health measures including physical distancing.
4. Education on all required protocols for absences, such as IPAC and PPE, will be provided by the home.
5. Further restrictions related to resident absences will be imposed on homes in communities identified under **Alert or High Alert status**. Retirement home residents may be permitted to leave the home for **essentials** (e.g., groceries, medical appointments, filling prescriptions), with the exception of also being permitted to leave

for **single-night emergency room visits**. They must also meet the screening, face covering/masking, physical distancing and education requirements outlined above.

### **B: Absences That Include an Overnight Stay**

A resident may leave for an absence that includes **at least one overnight stay** if the residence meets the following requirements:

1. The residence must **not** be currently in an **outbreak**.
  - In the event the residence allows absences but enters into an outbreak, there should be a hold on starting new absences until the home is no longer in outbreak. Homes must establish compliance with all CMOH Directives for homes in outbreak and follow directions from the local PHU. *[Identify how residents will be informed when absences are put on hold, or resume following outbreak – e.g. signage, etc.]*
2. The residence is in a community that has **NOT** been identified under **Alert or High Alert** status.
3. Residents must wear a face covering/mask at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and are responsible for supplying their own face covering/mask while they are on absences. The residence may, **at its discretion**, opt to supply face coverings/masks for absences. *[If the residence has a procedure in the event that they will provide residents a mask, then state the process]*. The resident must also be reminded about the importance of public health measures including physical distancing.
4. Education on all required protocols for short absences, such as IPAC and PPE, will be provided by the home to the resident prior to their absence. *[Include any site-specific parameters regarding resident behaviour during the absence – e.g. they must adhere to cough etiquette, etc.]*  
*[Identify any additional site-specific limitations on visits or additional parameters or steps; example – if the resident needs to advise staff of the leave in advance, where they are going and who they will be seeing, how long they will be out, etc.]*
5. Upon return to the home, residents **must self-isolate for 14 days under Droplet and Contact Precautions**, but are not required to be tested upon re- entry to the home.
6. Residents who are self-isolating for 14-days following an overnight stay **may not receive general visitors, leave the home for short absences or for overnight stays**.

### **If the Residence Enters into an Outbreak – Absence in Hospital**

Per Directive #3, in the **event of an outbreak** where residents cannot be placed in other areas of the residence that are not part of the declared outbreak area, or there are other exceptional circumstances

(e.g., resident safety, advice from local public health unit), temporary short-stay in hospital may be considered for residents to support outbreak management and IPAC measures under certain parameters.

**Discontinuation of Absences:** The requirement that any non-adherence to the rules could be the basis for discontinuation of short absences has been removed.

## Appendix A – Symptoms List

Source: Ministry of Health COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms (September 21, 2020)

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_reference\\_doc\\_symptoms.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf)

Ministry of Health

### COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms

#### Version 7.0 – September 21, 2020

When assessing for the symptoms below the focus should be on evaluating if they are **new, worsening, or different from an individual's baseline health status (usual state)**. Symptoms should not be chronic or related to other known causes or conditions (see examples below).

#### Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- **Fever** (temperature of 37.8°C/100.0°F or greater)
- **Cough** (that is new or worsening (e.g. continuous, more than usual if chronic cough) including croup (barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing)
  - *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)*
- **Shortness of breath** (dyspnea, out of breath, unable to breathe deeply, wheeze, that is worse than usual if chronically short of breath)
  - *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., chronic heart failure, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)*

#### Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- **Sore throat** (painful swallowing or difficulty swallowing)
  - *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., post nasal drip, gastroesophageal reflux)*
- **Rhinorrhea** (runny nose)
  - *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., returning inside from the cold, chronic sinusitis unchanged from baseline)*
- **Nasal congestion** (stuffy nose)
  - *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., seasonal allergies)*

Refer to link above for full list of typical and atypical signs and symptoms.



Appendix B – How to Put on/Take off a Mask

Source: World Health Organization ([Non-Medical Fabric Mask](#))

## HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

[who.int/epi-win](http://who.int/epi-win)

Do's →

-  Clean your hands before touching the mask
-  Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty
-  Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides
-  Cover your mouth, nose, and chin
-  Avoid touching the mask
-  Clean your hands before removing the mask
-  Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head
-  Pull the mask away from your face
-  Store the mask in a clean plastic, resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it
-  Remove the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag
-  Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day
-  Clean your hands after removing the mask

Don'ts →

-  Do not use a mask that looks damaged
-  Do not wear a loose mask
-  Do not wear the mask under the nose
-  Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1 metre
-  Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through
-  Do not wear a dirty or wet mask
-  Do not share your mask with others

**A fabric mask can protect others around you. To protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19, remember to keep at least 1 metre distance from others, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid touching your face and mask.**



**World Health Organization**

Source: World Health Organization ([Medical Mask](#))

## HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

[who.int/epi-win](http://who.int/epi-win)

### Do's →

- 

Wash your hands before touching the mask
- 

Inspect the mask for tears or holes
- 

Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is
- 

Ensure the colored-side faces outwards
- 

Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose
- 

Cover your mouth, nose, and chin
- 

Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides
- 

Avoid touching the mask
- 

Remove the mask from behind the ears or head
- 

Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it
- 

Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin
- 

Wash your hands after discarding the mask

### Don'ts →

- 

Do not use a ripped or damp mask
- 

Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose
- 

Do not wear a loose mask
- 

Do not touch the front of the mask
- 

Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask
- 

Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others
- 

Do not re-use the mask

**Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.**


