

Staying Safe during COVID-19

- **15 Tips and Ideas for Safer Visits at Long-Term Care Homes**
- **PLUS: Visiting People with Dementia in Long-Term Care Homes**

Visit CanAge.ca/tools to learn more!

These tips may be appropriate for

- (1) long-term care homes which are COVID-19-free or
- (2) where the long-term care home allows visits.

Please always follow all visiting restrictions long-term care homes and obey all public health orders.



1. Sign-Up Online for Visits

Long-term care homes should have easy-to-use, online sign-up sheets for types of visiting options offered with time slots available. Whenever possible, visits should be scheduled.



2. Cleaning between Visits

Make sure the room is cleaned between visits.



3. Practice Proper Hygiene

Use proper handwashing hygiene. Where appropriate, consider using masks and gloves for visits. Disinfectant wipes are great to clean hands, surfaces and items used during the visit.



4. Drop-Off & Delivery Protocol

Long-term care homes should have a dedicated drop-off zone for gifts or items for residents. Protocols should be in place for drop-off by family and caregivers, and delivery to the resident's room. A four day "hold" on these items is often suggested to reduce virus transmission.



5. Protocols for Gifts

Gifts and items should follow the same protocols as holiday food and toy drives: non-perishable, sealed items are best. Sealed chocolates or candy are a better choice than homemade goodies.



6. Think Flower Alternatives

Instead of cut flowers, which may not live through a four day “hold” period, choose a flowering plant, orchid, plant or succulent. To keep the items watered, consider adding a filled watering bulb. Pretty, silk or artificial flowers, may also be a good choice.



7. Distancing during your Visit

Use 6-8 ft folding tables with chairs on the far ends of the table to keep physical distancing during outside visits.



8. Build a Visiting Booth

Help long-term care facilities build or buy a plexiglass visiting booth which is accessible to residents – make the visiting booth wheelchair, assistive device and if possible rolling hospital bed accessible.

We recommend having plexiglass from no more than one metre upwards to ensure that those needing to use assistive devices will be able to see out, and younger children to visit with grandparents.



9. Gazebo or Greenhouse

Install a glassed-in gazebo or greenhouse for the resident to sit in, while you sit outside. Fill with plants for a lovely indoor-outdoor space for everyone to enjoy.



10. Future Project: Drive Through

Create a “drive through” area for visits. Plexiglass or physical distancing barriers can be put in place and the visitor can stay in their car.

Please – no reaching out and touching!



Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre

11. How to "Window Visit"

Designated window visits zones can be a good option for many – but keep the glass closed as the virus can pass through window screens. Help residents on upper floors come down to the ground floor designated window visit zone. Include residents in wheeled hospital-style beds. Keep ½ metre between you and the glass divider! (and don't kiss or touch the glass...we know you will want to!)



12. Do a Ping Pong Table Talk

Repurpose a ping pong table – replace the net with plexiglass and keep chairs on each end.



13. Assist with Hearing

To assist with hearing while physically distancing, use cell phones or walkie-talkies. See if your bluetooth will pair to a resident's hearing aid. The call can route directly to the hearing aid in some cases.



14. Video Visits

iPads, tablets, smart phones and video devices are great for video visits but need charging. Tablet holders with auto-charge functions can be a great option to keep the tablet in a good place for video visits while also keeping devices charged.



15. Don't Share Food

NEVER share food while you are visiting. Enquire instead at the LTC what special foods might be available for them to provide to celebrate events – milestones, birthdays etc.

Residents with dementia may have special needs and considerations when visiting during COVID-19.



- 1** Window visits can make the person with dementia more agitated and confused.
- 2** Outside visits for a person with dementia are best done as alone as possible in a familiar location or wandering pathway at the long-term care homes, as reminders of physical distancing may not be effective for them.
- 3** If the person has a better time of day, schedule a visit during that time.
- 4** Consider whether a companion stuffed animal may be comforting.
- 5** Create art, pictures, and new memory boards for their rooms.
- 6** Share the resident's favourite music with them, via a bluetooth speaker, a tablet, iPad or iPod.
- 7** Engage in a comforting outdoor activity, but the visitor must remain the required 2 metre distance. Consider if additional supports are needed.