

Supporting Long-term Care Home Residents during Omicron

This slide deck was prepared by members of the Congregate Care Settings Working Group. It offers guidance for friends, families and essential caregivers on visiting safely with Long-Term Care home residents.

February 10, 2022



Why is Omicron a risk for Long-term Care (LTC) home residents

The Omicron variant spreads more easily than prior variants of SARS-CoV-2. Community members, as well as friends, family and essential caregivers in a LTC home have an important role to help to keep homes safe for residents.

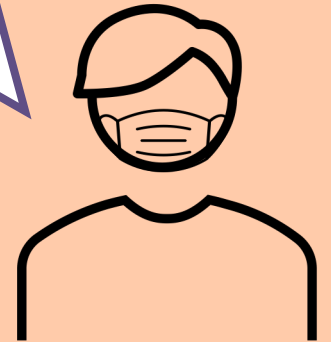
- There are more than 68,000 residents living in 626 LTC homes across Ontario. These residents are a highly vulnerable group that need focused attention. Residents are of advanced age, mostly women and often have multiple medical problems.
- The large majority of LTC residents have at least three doses of COVID-19 vaccine and fourth doses are now being offered. However, Omicron still poses a risk and infection can lead to serious illness and in some cases, residents may not recover.
- **Visitors including friends, family and essential caregivers play a critical role in the health and well-being of LTC home residents.**
- **This information is meant to help inform visitors on how to optimize safety for LTC home residents from Omicron, especially once general visits resume.**

What you can do to optimize the safety of LTC home residents from Omicron

What can we do in our own community to reduce the spread of Omicron and optimize safety of LTC home residents?

The number one risk factor for outbreaks in LTC homes is how many cases there are of COVID-19 in the community around the home. Everyone can help reduce the number of cases in the surrounding community:

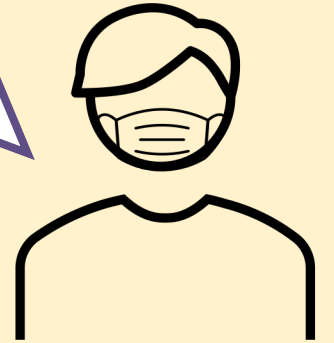
- ✓ **Get vaccinated** for COVID-19, and if you have received 2 doses get a 3rd dose as soon as you can. Three doses are far more protective against infections due to Omicron and reducing infections means reducing spread.
- ✓ **Follow public health measures**
 - Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated indoor spaces and maintain physical distancing
 - Reduce social contacts and keep gatherings small, if you do gather, do it outdoors instead of indoors
 - Wear a high quality, well-fitting mask
 - Stay home when sick



What friends, family and essential caregivers can do to optimize the safety of LTC home residents from Omicron

What can friends, family and essential caregivers do to help keep their loved ones safe when visiting?

- ✓ Get vaccinated for COVID-19: if you have received 2 doses get a 3rd dose as soon as you can.
- ✓ Encourage COVID-19 vaccination for ALL members of your household, including eligible children.
- ✓ Understand and participate in the testing requirements for entering a LTC home.
- ✓ **A single negative rapid antigen test result is not conclusive and should not be used as a green light for abandoning or reducing precautions. See this [video](#) for how to perform an oral-nasal swab.**
- ✓ Even with a negative rapid antigen test, **you must wear a high-quality mask at all times**, perform hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, and maintain 2 meters of physical distancing at all times unless providing direct care or having brief contact (e.g., hugs).
- ✓ Once in the home, familiarize yourself with the personal protective equipment that you may be required to wear, including how to put it on and take it off properly; it is essential you wear the personal protective equipment required as directed by the home. Ask for help if you are not sure how to put on and take off your personal protective equipment.
- ✓ Do not visit if you have symptoms of COVID-19, have suspected or confirmed COVID or are a household contact of someone with COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed).
- ✓ Monitor and report to the home on any issues with the well-being of your loved one.

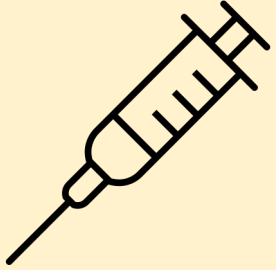


What can friends, family and essential caregivers do to stay connected with their loved ones?

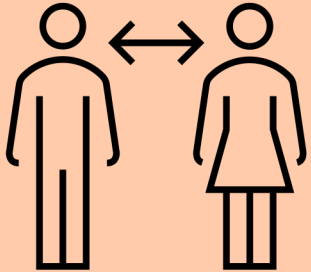
- ✓ Stay connected in multiple ways: maintaining communication is critical for the health and well-being of your loved ones. In-person visits are the best when possible, other ways include:
 - Phone calls
 - Virtual visits
 - Writing letters



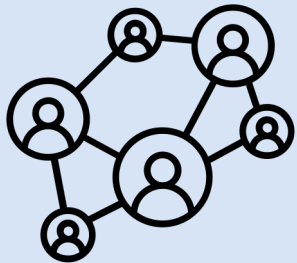
COVID-19 outbreaks in LTC homes are related to how many cases there are in the community. Everyone can help reduce COVID-19 spread.



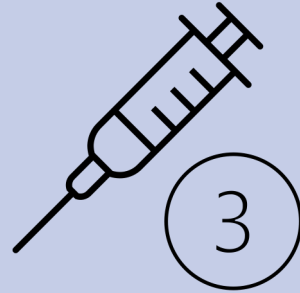
Getting vaccinated against COVID-19



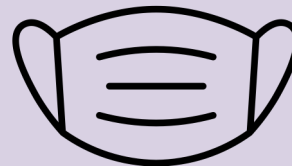
Avoiding crowded indoor spaces and maintain physical distancing



Reducing social contacts

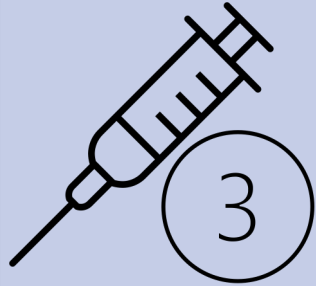


For those who have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, it is critical to get a third dose as soon as you are eligible. Three doses are far more protective against infections due to Omicron and reducing infections means reducing spread.



Wearing a high quality, well-fitting mask

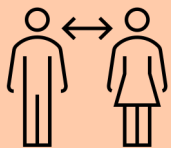
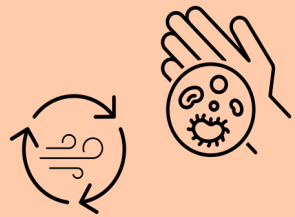
What friends, family and essential caregivers can do to optimize the safety of Long-Term Care home residents from Omicron when visiting



Make sure they have three doses of COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are eligible.

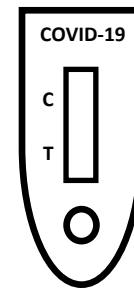


Make sure that ALL their eligible household members, including eligible children, are vaccinated against COVID-19.



Follow strict public safety protocol measures for the duration of your visit:

- Wear a high-quality mask and keep it on, covering your mouth and nose for the entire duration of the visit
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Maintain 2 meter physical distancing from staff, residents, essential caregivers and other visitors when possible (unless providing direct care or for brief contact with residents e.g., hugs)



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Public Health Measures are effective against Omicron

