



MODULE: Outbreak Management	SECTION: Infection Control	
REGULATION: RHA 10	POLICY NAME: COVID-19 Visitor Program	
POLICY NO: I 4.10	ORCA STANDARD:	EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2020
REVISED DATE: Dec 2020	REVIEWED DATE: Dec 2020	PAGE: 1 OF 2

I 4.10 COVID-19 Protocols for Resident Absences

*As per the CMOH Directive #3 (December 7, 2020) and Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) Retirement Home COVID-19 Visiting Policy (December 9, 2020) requirement for **education on all required protocols for absences (such as IPAC and PPE) to be provided by the residence**, this document and any supporting materials will be shared with all residents.*

Introduction

Effective **December 11, 2020**, the following requirements apply for resident absences:

A) Short-term Absences:

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, filling prescriptions, taking walks, etc.), with the **exception of single-night emergency room visits**, provided the following:

- The retirement home is **NOT in an outbreak** in or in a **PHU under Orange (Restrict), Red (Control) or Grey (Lockdown)** at the time the absence is to commence.
- If the home allows absences but enters into an outbreak there should be a hold on starting new absences until the home is no longer in outbreak.
- The local PHU has not directed the home to cease all short absences.
- The home is compliant with all CMOH Directives and follow directions from the local PHU.
- Upon return to the home, residents are actively screened and monitored for symptoms but are not required to be tested or self-isolate.
- Residents must always wear a mask 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. The resident shall also be reminded about the importance of public health measures including physical distancing.
- The home shall provide education on all required protocols for short absences, such as IPAC and PPE.
- The resident must inform the staff at the screening desk of their absence and expected return.
- Family members wishing to take a resident off property must fill out a Short Absence Waiver prior to the residents absence.

If the home is in a PHU under Orange (Restrict), Red (Control) or Grey (Lockdown), residents may be permitted to leave the home for **walks or 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.



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B) Overnight Absences: A resident may leave for an absence that includes at least one overnight stay if the home meets the following requirements:

- The retirement home is **NOT in an outbreak**.
 - If a home allows absences but enters into an outbreak, there should be a hold on starting new overnight absences until the home is no longer in outbreak. Residents and families will be informed of any changes in our absence policy by memo and signage.
 - Homes must establish compliance with all CMOH Directives for homes in outbreak and follow directions from the local PHU.
- The home is **NOT in a PHU under Orange (Restrict), Red (Control) or Grey (Lockdown)**.
- Residents must wear a face covering/mask at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and be reminded about the importance of public health measures including physical distancing. The resident is responsible for supplying a face covering/mask while they are on absences. The home may, **at its discretion**, supply face coverings/masks for absences.
- Education on all required protocols for short-term absences, such as IPAC and PPE, will be provided by the home to the resident prior to their absence.
- Residents must inform staff at the screening desk of their absence and expected return.
- 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.
- Residents who are self-isolating for 14-days following an overnight stay **may not receive General Visitors, leave the home for short-term absences or for overnight stays**.

For residents that leave the home for an **out-patient medical** visit, the home must provide a mask. The resident must wear a mask while out, if tolerated and be screened upon their return, but does not need to be self-isolated.

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

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)*





HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

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 2 metre distance from others, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoid touching your face and mask.



Source: World Health Organization ([Non-Medical Fabric Mask](#)) *Poster modified to 2

HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

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 2 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

EPI·WIN



Source: World Health Organization ([Medical Mask](#)) *Poster modified to 2 metres