

Infection Prevention and Control

Visitation Guidance

Compassionate exemption for designated support persons (DSPs) who test positive for COVID-19 or who are asymptomatic (close contact of a COVID-19 case) – All phases

2022-10-06

Vitalité Health Network may grant compassionate visitation by designated support persons (DSPs) who test positive for COVID-19 or are asymptomatic (close contact of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19).

These guidelines apply to the following patient populations:†

- End-of-life patients whose palliative performance scale score is <20%;
- Patients in labour and delivery;
- Patients who have just given birth.

Visitation criteria

1. COVID-19-positive DSPs

- They must be asymptomatic, or their symptoms must have resolved;
- They must not have had a fever or taken fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours;
- Five days must have passed since their positive test.

Note: Following visitation, all frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected. The patient will remain on isolation precautions.

2. DSPs who are close contacts of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19

- They must be asymptomatic;
- They must have had a negative PCR test prior to their arrival at the facility (test performed within 48 hours prior to visiting);*
- They must agree to be tested on day 5 and day 10 (if the visits continue).

Note: Following visitation, all frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected. Isolation precautions will be discontinued.

Visitation guidelines

- Access must be approved by the department director or their designate.
- The patient or their substitute decision-maker must agree to the visit.
- In consultation with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), the department director or their designate and the nurse manager must establish a plan for the DSP to travel to the patient's room.
- DSPs must follow IPC precautions as directed by staff (hand hygiene, physical distancing from those not from their household, and continuous masking, etc.).
- The visitation time and date must be scheduled in advance with the nurse manager or their designate.
- The patient must be in a private room or be the lone occupant of the room and must be placed on Droplet/Contact Precautions.
- The DSP must be escorted directly to the patient's room.
- The DSP must be the only person visiting with the patient for the duration of the visit.

- The DSP will be isolated with the patient and must remain in the room with the patient. The DSP will be required to leave the facility should they fail to adhere to IPC precautions and directions from staff at any time.
- The DSP will be provided with a meal tray if the visit is for an extended period of time.
- IPC must be advised if there is a breach of IPC protocols.

NOTE: The Network may also consider using this process under exceptional circumstances for compassionate reasons in cases that fall outside the patient populations listed above; this decision would be at the discretion of the department director.

- * If the DSP visit is time-sensitive and PCR testing has not been performed within the previous 48 hours, a GeneXpert test may be used to expedite visitation. A PCR test should be ordered by the attending physician for the patient being visited.

References

Alberta Health Services. Compassionate Exemptions from Quarantine & Access Restrictions for Visitation. January 31, 2021
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17252.aspx>

Prince Edward Island. Visitor policy and protocols for Health PEI facilities, including Long-Term Care Facilities. December 2021.
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/visitor-policy-and-protocols-for-health-pei-facilities-including-long-term>