



Celebrating the Holidays Safely in LTCHs and RHs during COVID-19



Immunizations

Staff and residents should get their flu and COVID-19 immunization before the holiday season (if they have not already done so).



Visiting

- During the holidays, friends, and families should be encouraged to visit their loved ones. Follow the current provincial guidance for visitors (guidance: [LTCHs](#) , [RHs](#)).
- Visitors who cannot visit in-person can to keep in touch with loved ones by phone or video chat.



Food

- Celebrating the holidays with food is important for many people and is encouraged, as long as the provincial guidance on communal dining is followed (guidance: [LTCHs](#) , [RHs](#)).
- If staff have communal food gatherings, staff must be reminded that it is vital to maintain physical distancing before removing their mask for eating and drinking.
- Review the Government of Canada's [Holiday Food Safety](#) webpage.
- Holiday treats that are baked or cooked in the facility must comply with food premises regulations.
- Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of [COVID-19 associated with food](#). Therefore, food brought in from outside the facility (e.g., gifts, catering) is low risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Remind residents and staff to clean their hands before and after eating and/or handling food products/packaging.
- Residents should not share food.



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Decorating

- Decorating your home for the holidays is encouraged. **Review the following tips for decorations:**
 - Indoor decorations should not create clutter (cluttered areas may be missed during cleaning and disinfection).
 - Decorations should be cleanable or disposable (in case they become contaminated).
 - Decorations should be placed in non-clinical areas (e.g., lobbies) and low-touch areas (e.g., high on walls) so residents can see and enjoy them, but are less likely to become contaminated.
 - Decorations should be kept out of clinical areas (e.g., nursing stations), where they are more likely to become contaminated.
 - Decorations should not obstruct environmental cleaning.
 - Decorations should be placed in areas that can easily be kept clean and free of dust.
 - Decorations should not be placed on or over high touch surfaces (e.g., hand rails), as high touch surfaces need to be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.
 - Key items such as alcohol-based hand rub dispensers and personal protective equipment must remain accessible and not hidden behind decorations.
 - Decorations should be in accordance with fire regulations.



Activities

- Group holiday related activities are encouraged. Provincial guidance for organized events and social gatherings must be followed (guidance: [LTCHs](#) , [RHs](#)).
- Consult with residents to see what their holiday traditions are and see if they can be incorporated into an activity that complies with provincial recommendations.



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Gifts/Care Packages

- Gifts and care packages from family and friends is encouraged.
- Remind family and friends that they should not prepare or send packages if they are ill.
- Packages do not need to be cleaned and disinfected or held in storage before being distributed, as the risk of spreading COVID-19 through handling packages is low.
- Remind residents and staff to clean their hands before and after handling gifts/care packages.
- Homes should follow their current policy for gift giving/exchanges.
- If edible gifts are received, there should be a policy about what type of gifts can be accepted (e.g., pre-packaged, individually wrapped, store bought chocolate).



Religious Services, Rites, or Ceremonies

- Religious services must comply with provincial guidance (guidance: [LTCHs](#) , [RHs](#)).
- Any shared items should be cleaned and disinfected between residents.

Note: The above recommendations are current as of Dec. 2, 2022. These recommendations may change if the provincial recommendations change.