

**From:** Ontario News <[newsroom@ontario.ca](mailto:newsroom@ontario.ca)>

**Sent:** July 14, 2021 9:01 AM

**Subject:** Ontario Updates Testing Requirements at Long-Term Care Homes

---

## NEWS RELEASE

# Ontario Updates Testing Requirements at Long-Term Care Homes

Change applies to asymptomatic, fully immunized staff, caregivers and visitors

**July 14, 2021**

[Ministry of Long-Term Care](#)

TORONTO — Ontario will be removing the requirement that fully-immunized and asymptomatic staff, caregivers and visitors be tested before entering long-term care homes. This update to testing requirements was made in consultation with Dr. Kieran Moore, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and is based on the latest scientific evidence and expert advice. Updated guidance to retirement homes will also recommend exempting fully immunized people from routine testing. This change will coincide with Step Three of the province's Roadmap to Reopen, coming into effect on July 16, 2021.

“Based on the latest scientific evidence and best medical advice, we are removing the requirement of repeated surveillance testing from asymptomatic caregivers, visitors and staff who are fully immunized. Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people will still need to be tested to ensure a greater level of protection for residents and staff,” said Rod Phillips, Minister of Long-Term Care. “These changes are made possible because of the incredible efforts of millions of Ontarians who rolled up their sleeves and got vaccinated.”

The province continues to actively monitor COVID-19 activity and variants of concern, particularly in this vulnerable sector. The health and safety of residents, staff and all others who attend homes, including their mental and emotional wellbeing, remains a top priority.

As previously announced, restrictions to be eased as part of Step Three of the Roadmap to Reopen include:

- Removing the limits on the number of visitors to homes

- 
- Permitting buffet and family style dining
  - Providing all residents the ability to go on absences
  - Resumption of off-site excursions for residents
  - Resumption of activities such as singing and dancing

“Our government’s strategy to protect retirement home residents, staff and their families through vaccinations is working,” said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. “This means they will soon be able to resume many activities that they enjoyed before the pandemic.”

## Quick Facts

- A person is considered fully immunized if they have received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines approved by Health Canada (e.g., two doses of a two-dose vaccine series) and they received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.
- People can prove they are fully immunized by showing the physical or emailed receipt that was provided to them at the time of vaccination. [Vaccination receipts can also be downloaded or printed through the provincial portal.](#)
- All long-term care homes are required to have a COVID-19 immunization policy for staff, students and volunteers. At a minimum, the policy must require people in those groups to provide proof of one of three things:
  - Vaccination against COVID-19;
  - A medical reason for not being vaccinated against COVID-19;
  - or
  - Completion of a COVID-19 vaccination educational program
- Infection prevention and control measures, including masking and active screening of all people entering homes, will continue to be required regardless of immunization status.
- Full details of precautions and requirements in effect at long-term care homes are available on the Ministry of Long-Term Care’s [website](#) and [guidance document](#).
- As of July 12, 95 per cent of caregivers and 93 per cent of staff have received one dose.
- As of July 12, virtually all residents in long-term care homes have received two doses of vaccines, as have 91 per cent of caregivers and 87 per cent of staff.

## Quotes

---

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved and the situation in long-term care has improved, it is now time to change how fully immunized people entering homes are treated. With the Ministry's announcement that fully immunized people will no longer need to be tested and only need to provide proof of immunized status, families now have one fewer barrier to face in visiting their loved ones. This change reflects the scientific advice regarding testing, rewards vaccination, and balances risk and reward."

**- Samantha Peck**  
**Executive Director, Family Councils Ontario**

"These developments in policy create easier and smoother pathways for residents to connect with visitors and family members safely, and that is welcomed by OARC!"

**- Dee Lender**  
**Executive Director, Ontario Association of Residents' Council**

"The move to eliminating rapid testing for double vaccinated staff and visitors in long-term care is a welcome relief. This will reduce administrative burden for home operators and staff so that more focus can be placed where it belongs - resident care. "

**- Lisa Levin**  
**Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge**

"Thanks to dedicated vaccination efforts in the long-term care community, we are one step closer to a return to normal life in our homes. Today's announcement is welcome news to everyone in long-term care who has been tested regularly for COVID for more than a year."

**- Donna Duncan**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long-Term Care Association**

## **Additional Resources**

[COVID-19: Information for visitors to long-term care homes](#)

[COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario](#)

[Roadmap to Reopen](#)

Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

---

[Emergency information and orders](#)

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

## Media Contacts

### Vanessa De Matteis

Office of the Minister of Long-term Care

[Vanessa.DeMatteis@ontario.ca](mailto:Vanessa.DeMatteis@ontario.ca)

### Ministry of Long-Term Care Media Line

Communications Branch

[mltc.media@ontario.ca](mailto:mltc.media@ontario.ca)

We have recently updated Ontario Newsroom Subscription. You may receive additional emails. If you would like to update your subscription preferences or unsubscribe, click the 'manage your subscriptions' or 'unsubscribe' links down below.

[Visit the Newsroom](#)  
[Manage your subscriptions](#)  
[Unsubscribe](#)