

## Visitors and Caregivers of Older Adults

### Visiting older adults that live in a private dwelling

NOTE: This resource was created locally to accompany a provincial factsheet by Public Health Ontario, entitled: [How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19: Older Adults and People with Chronic Medical Conditions or Weakened Immune Systems](#)<sup>i</sup>. This resource provides additional information that is not contained in the Public Health Ontario factsheets, as well as local information intended to support residents in our region.

The focus of this resource is on safely visiting or helping older adults that are feeling well. For guidance on caring for someone who is self-isolating due to symptoms, see Public Health Ontario's factsheet: [Self Isolation: Guide for caregivers, household members and close contacts](#)<sup>ii</sup>.

#### Stay home and practice physical distancing

- Ontario's Ministry of Health strongly recommends that adults aged 70 years and older **stay at home ("self isolate")**.
- For more information on considerations for those living in a multi-unit dwelling that has shared living spaces, visit [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/covid19](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/covid19) and click the QUICK LINK: "[Information for Landlords/Tenants](#)".
- Only essential visitors, such as care providers, should be entering an older adult's house/private dwelling at this time.
- To help protect older adults and limit their potential exposure to COVID-19, offer to assist with ordering or pick-up of groceries, medication or other essential needs. Drop the items off at an identified area, such as their doorstep, unless they need additional help.
- Local grocers and pharmacies are offering options such as curbside pickup or delivery. Some are taking orders over the phone or by email, and others require an online order. More information can be found here: [www.peterborough.ca/en/city-services/grocery-pharmacy-resources-during-covid-19.aspx](http://www.peterborough.ca/en/city-services/grocery-pharmacy-resources-during-covid-19.aspx) or call City of Peterborough Social Services at 705-748-8830.
- Community Care Peterborough may be able to help with delivery. Contact your local office or the main Peterborough office at 705-742-7067.
- If the older adult lives with you or you are considering having them move in with you: Family members that do spend time in public settings (including work outside the home) should maintain physical distancing (more than 2 metres or 6 feet) from the older adult. Family members providing care to the older adult should try to limit their daily interactions with people outside the home.



#### Stay Active, connect socially and ask for help

- While it isn't always ideal, checking in with older adults using phone calls, video calls, texting and emails are safest for everyone right now.
- If the older adult in your life might enjoy video calls or other virtual activities, check in with them to see if they need help to set up the technology involved.

- Suggest options such as group exercise with Community Care, or activities offered by Activity Haven. Peterborough Library and Selwyn Library are offering a variety of programs as well. These agencies can provide guidance on setting up the required technology as well.
- The older adult may not enjoy these programs, but instead prefer regular phone calls with family and friends. Use your judgement to determine how to support them through this time.

### Wash your hands and clean frequently touched surfaces

- Essential visitors should wear a mask and wash their hands often when they visit.
- Wash your hands after handling nose and throat secretions (e.g., after throwing out used facial tissues).
- The best way to protect your hands is to make sure you are following good hand washing practices. Wearing gloves is not necessary.
- Wearing a non-medical mask can protect those around you. Non-medical masks have not been proven to protect the wearer, but can be an additional precaution taken to protect others.
  - Masks should not be shared.
  - Avoid touching and readjusting the mask as it can become contaminated.
- A mask is **NOT** a substitution for hand washing, physical distancing or self-isolation.
- If the older adult lives with you, try to clean and disinfect frequently touched items on a daily basis. Cleaning can be done with regular household cleaners.
- If the older adult lives with you or you are visiting them, do not share things like dishes, drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels or bedding with the older adult.
  - These items should be washed with soap or detergent in warm water after use. No special soap is needed. Dishwashers and washing machines can be used.
- Helping with the cleaning of linens, bedding, and clothing is okay.
- Avoid handling each other's cell phones or phone handset.
- Do not share cigarettes.



### For more information:

- Finding Available Services:
  - If any individual requires specific services, they can contact Ontario 211 for more information by phone at 2-1-1 or online at [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca).
  - The individual's family doctor or nurse practitioner may be able to connect them with local services.
  - The Age-Friendly Peterborough Coordinator, Jayne Culbert may be able to connect you with a service or program. She can be reached at [jculbert@peterborough.ca](mailto:jculbert@peterborough.ca) or 705-931-4403. Visit [www.peterborough.ca/aging](http://www.peterborough.ca/aging) for more information.
- Stay up-to-date with Peterborough Public Health:
  - Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) webpage: [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/covid19](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/covid19)
    - The QUICK LINKS menu will connect you with webpages that provide more information on things like Mental Health, Meeting Basic Needs and Seniors
  - Call: 705-743-1000

<sup>i</sup> [www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/2020/05/factsheet-covid-19-immunocompromised.pdf?la=en](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/2020/05/factsheet-covid-19-immunocompromised.pdf?la=en)

<sup>ii</sup> [www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-guide-isolation-caregivers.pdf?la=en](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-guide-isolation-caregivers.pdf?la=en)