



## CAREGIVING FROM A SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCE WHEN THE PERSON YOU ARE CARING FOR GETS ILL AND/OR NEEDS TO SELF-ISOLATE

For caregivers, the well-being of the person they are caring for is always top of mind. With the changes in services and visiting restrictions in the hospital, caregivers are concerned what will happen if the person they are caring for becomes ill. Below is some information and tips on what to do in these types of situations.

### THE PERSON I AM CARING FOR NEEDS MEDICAL CARE

- **Urgent/Emergency medical care**

Whether or not it's related to COVID-19, if the person is very ill or has a life-threatening medical emergency, **call 911** or head to your local [Emergency Department](#).

- **COVID-19 related medical concerns**

- Symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild to severe. The most common symptoms include fever, cough and difficulty breathing.
- If you think the person you are caring for has COVID-19 symptoms or has been in close contact with someone who has symptoms, follow your local public health's recommendations and [self-isolate](#)
- Residents in northeast Ontario can use the [Ontario Health West COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) to determine how to seek further care.
- Local Public Health Agencies
  - **Porcupine Health Unit** 705-267-1181
  - **Temiskaming Health Unit** 705-647-4305

- **Non-COVID-19 medical concerns**

- Although it may look a little bit different than it has in the past, **Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners** are still seeing patients. Be sure to call your Doctor's office to explain your situation. Many are offering virtual/phone visits.
- Most [Walk-In Clinics](#) are continuing to operate, however it is recommended that you call ahead.
- If you do not have a Doctor, or your current Doctor is not taking appointments, you can use the [Ontario Virtual Care Clinic](#) to connect to



# Tips for Caregivers



an on-call doctor by video or audio for simple health questions. You need to complete a simple registration form on-line.

**Note:** [Telehealth Ontario](#) can always be contacted for advice at 1-866-797-0000.

## THE PERSON I AM CARING FOR NEEDS INCREASED SUPPORT IN THE HOME

In this situation you may need to either start or increase support for the person you are caring for. In both cases, reach out to the below organizations, let them know about the change in your situation to explore what options are available:

- **Community Support Services**

A collection of agencies that provide health and wellness services that includes transportation, meals and nutrition, education and support, safety and reassurance, health and wellness, support in the home, intensive support programs and adult day services. For one-stop access in your community, call:

- **Golden Manor-Adult Day Program** 705-360-2644 ext. 4512
- **Bayshore Home Health** 705-269-0289 or 1-866-223-3585
- **Timmins Red Cross** 705-267-4900

- **North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Home and Community Care**

Community health care services such as nursing, personal support workers, and various therapies. Anyone can make a referral: a family doctor, friend, family member, even you, yourself. To explore options and eligibility, call: 705-267-2334 or 1-888-668-2222.

## THE PERSON I AM CARING FOR NEEDS TO SELF-ISOLATE IN THE HOME

Follow the advice from your local Public Health Agency on protecting yourself while helping the person you are caring for. [Public Health Ontario](#) has developed a [tip sheet](#) about this situation and also [what to do with pets](#).

- **Limit contact with others**

- Do not leave home unless it's to seek medical care
- If contact cannot be avoided with someone, take the following precautions:



# Tips for Caregivers



- keep at least 2 metres (2 arms length) between yourself and the other person
- stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom, if possible
- keep interactions brief
- wear a non-medical mask or face covering
- **Keep your hands clean**
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and dry with disposable paper towels or dry reusable towel, replacing it when it becomes wet
- **Keep surfaces clean and avoid sharing personal items**
  - At least once daily, clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch often, like toilets, bedside tables, doorknobs, phones and television remotes.
  - Do not share personal items with others, such as toothbrushes, towels, bed linen, utensils or electronic devices.
- **Monitor symptoms in yourself and the person you are caring for**
  - Monitor symptoms and contact your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner if you have any questions or concerns
- **Supplies to have at home when isolating**
  - Medical masks if available for the person and the caregiver. If not available, non-medical masks or facial covering
  - Eye protection (face shield or goggles) and disposable gloves (do not re-use) for use by the caregiver
  - Disposable paper towels and tissues
  - Waste container with plastic liner
  - Thermometer and over the counter medication to reduce fever (e.g., ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
  - Running water and hand soap
  - Alcohol-based sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
  - Dish soap
  - Regular laundry soap
  - Regular household cleaning products and hard-surface disinfectant, if not available, concentrated (5%) liquid bleach and a separate container for dilution



# Tips for Caregivers



- Alcohol prep wipes or appropriate products for high-touch electronics
- Non-perishable foods that you typically eat/drink when sick
  - Adapted from [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

## THE PERSON I AM CARING FOR NEEDS TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL

Whether or not the person you are caring for needs to go to the hospital because of COVID-19 or another illness, there are currently restrictions on caregivers and visitors coming into the hospital. Below are some suggestions on what you can do to improve the experience. The Alzheimer Society of Ontario also features a series of [handy checklists and forms](#) for a person with dementia to fill out with a family member, friend, or caregiver.

- **Create a list of important numbers**

Think about all those numbers that would be good to have at your fingertips: Family Physician, Pharmacy, family and friends that can help you.

Here are some additional suggestions:

- If you are very ill or have a life-threatening emergency, **call 911** whether or not it's related to COVID-19
- Community Support Services and Home and Community Care - South West Local Health Integration Network (see above)
- Local Public Health Agencies and Telehealth Ontario (see above)
- **Create a simple information package for the hospital care team with information about the person**
  - Information about the person's medical condition, medical history, allergies, medic alert information and medications
  - Particularly for someone with dementia, consider filling out some information for health care providers about the person you are caring for – their needs, likes, dislikes and interests.
- **Have a conversation with the person you are caring for about their wishes for future health and personal care**
  - Advance Care Planning is a process of thinking about and sharing wishes for future health and personal care. You never know when you will need to speak for someone else. In Ontario, there are specific laws about when and who can make healthcare decisions when someone becomes incapable of doing so. To learn more, check out [Speak Up Ontario](#).



## THE PERSON I AM CARING FOR HAS BEEN ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL

- Ask the hospital what their current policies are around caregivers coming into the hospital.
- Discuss with the care team of the person you are caring for how to:
  - receive updated information about how the person is doing and what the situation is like in the hospital. Some [suggestions/tips on what to ask](#) have been developed for those in Long Term Care, but may be helpful for someone in hospital as well.
  - maintain a social connection with the person you are caring using telephone and technology while they are in the hospital