Keeping other residents in your long-term care home safe after your community visit

As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, there is more opportunity for you to spend time outside of your long-term care home. There is always a risk of exposure in the community, so it is important to think about things you can do to help keep COVID-19 from getting into your long-term care home after a visit in the community.

To help understand your chances of having come into contact with COVID-19 during your community visit, think about your visit and what activities you took part in.

If you only spent time in your loved ones' home, were the people you spent time with:	If you spent time in public settings, were there:
• Showing symptoms of or positive for COVID-19? • Required to be self-isolating? • Not vaccinated? • Crowded together, especially indoors? • In large numbers and/or not wearing masks? • People you did not know? • People known to spend time with lots of other people? • Singing, shouting, or exercising vigorously?	• Known high numbers of people who had COVID-19? • Large numbers of people in the area, especially indoors? • People you did not know who were not wearing masks? • People who were not physically distancing from you?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, the chance of having been exposed to COVID-19 is higher than if the answers are no. The more questions you answered yes to, the higher your risk level is.

Think about the steps you took to keep yourself safe. If you are vaccinated (or have recovered from a COVID-19 infection in the last 90 days), wore a mask, maintained healthy habits like washing your hands, gathered safely, and kept your distance from people you did not know, you helped lower your risk.

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When you return to your long-term care home, follow these steps to keep those around you safe:

- If you spent time with someone who is positive for COVID-19 and their symptom onset or positive test was in the last 7 days, tell staff and isolate in your room immediately when you return. Wait for information on next steps. You will need to be tested for COVID-19.

- Watch for symptoms. If you notice any symptoms, report them to staff immediately. It is especially important to watch for symptoms if you spent time with someone who was showing symptoms of or supposed to be self-isolating for COVID-19 and tell staff of this possible exposure.

- Maintain healthy habits. Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer. Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Avoid sharing food, drinks, and personal items.

You are encouraged to take additional measures to keep others safe after you return from your visit, especially if your risk level in the community was higher. It is up to you* to decide if you want to take these measures and which ones you feel are appropriate for you given your personal situation.

Consider:

- Wearing a mask when with others. Wear a mask when you cannot keep distance from others or when you are in common areas. Wear your mask for 72 hours after you return from your visit.

- Testing for COVID-19. Take one PCR test 72 hours after you return from your visit.

- Keeping distance and limiting interactions with other residents. Keep 2 metres distance and limit your interaction with other residents. Consider eating meals in your room and avoiding group activities for 72 hours after you return from your visit.

If you are a substitute decision maker, you can help to make the decision about whether it is appropriate for your loved one to take additional measures to protect other residents when they return from their visit.

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