



16 March 2020

[Novel Coronavirus \(COVID -19\)](#)

Abbeyfield Canada shares the concern of all our Houses across Canada, their resident tenants, and their families with respect to the novel coronavirus (COVID -19).

Each House will have its own policy with respect to social isolation of an at-risk population, being the residents in all our Houses, as well as staff, volunteers, and Board members. We expect each policy to reflect the standards of the municipality, province, and federal jurisdiction in which they reside.

Our national office will remain open in order to offer information and support as possible. We support Houses to consider the following:

- Implementing an increased personal hygiene protocol for all residents, essential staff, volunteers, and Board members who are required to keep each House operating in a safe and secure manner.
- Considering visiting restrictions on non-essential persons, including family members of residents, while recognizing that an Abbeyfield resident must be guaranteed the right to decide for themselves as each House is also their personal home.
- Providing similar hygiene guidance and support to personal support workers or any other outside health care workers that may have a relationship with residents.
- Seeking the support and recommendations from public health officials in each jurisdiction in which the House resides.

We recommend that each House visit the website of Health Canada for information updates, prevention techniques, and risks related to the virus.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

Please also visit the websites of your province and municipality.

On the following page, we offer generic precautions and encourage Houses to follow as appropriate.

Precautions

Precautions that each House can take include:

- Restrooms, handrails, door handles, and other commonly used surfaces can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Staff can be wearing gloves and special aprons while cleaning where practical and washing their hands on a regular basis.
- Provide residents with the means to ensure that they are taking similar precautions within their own rooms.

Setup for each House can include:

- Provide the means for people to wash their hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer.
- Encourage everyone to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth unless they have just washed their hands.
- Cover their cough and sneeze with a tissue or into their arm, not their hand
- If possible, reduce visitors, especially if any resident is otherwise unwell and at increased risk.
- Avoid visiting people in other hospitals or long-term care centres or any other place of public assembly.
- It is still recommended that everyone get a flu shot if they haven't already as the flu virus is still circulating in the community.
- Increase frequency of cleaning high- touch surfaces such as elevator buttons, keyboards, mouse, phones, desks, computers, seating areas, lunch tables, kitchens, washrooms, etc.
- Although not conclusive, there may be benefit to increasing the spatial separation between desks and workstations as well as individuals (e.g., employees, residents) from each other, ideally a 2 metre separation should be maintained, unless there is a physical barrier (e.g., cubicle, plexiglass window).
- Provide increased awareness about and communication to staff, volunteers, and Board members about COVID-19.
- Take precautions for social events if they are at all going to occur.