



## Key Messages

1. The health and safety of our staff, patients, residents, and families remains our top priority. Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will continue to play an important role in the prevention of COVID-19 transmission in healthcare settings once the Public Health Order lifts July 11.
2. Our healthcare facilities continue to provide service to the province's vulnerable populations, including pediatric populations under 12 years old that are not currently eligible for any of the vaccines and those with compromised immune systems.
3. Outbreaks involving the Delta Variants have documented transmission, even among fully vaccinated people.
4. On July 11, 2021, all SHA facilities, except for Long Term Care, will continue to follow and enforce continuous masking and facility screening, including ALL health care workers, including those working in home care and community. Vaccination status does not impact the need to wear a medical grade mask while in SHA facilities. This will be continuously re-evaluated based on epidemiology and modeling.
5. To help keep all residents safe in SHA Long Term Care (LTC) Homes, we ask that families and visitors continue to wear a mask indoors when a physical distance of two-metres cannot be maintained.
6. Acute care facilities will continue to follow the guidance for Level 1 family presence. Restrictions are reviewed weekly with the goal to maximize family presence and further ease restrictions as soon as it is safe to do so.

## Q and A

**Q1: Does Family Presence also open up to everyone on July 11?**

**A1:** No. Family Presence in SHA facilities, except for LTC, will remain at Level 1; two family members/supports can be designated with one present at a time. Family presence restrictions are reviewed weekly with the goal of easing restrictions as soon as it is safe to do so.

In Long Term Care, there will be no limit to the number of family members and visitors that are welcomed effective July 11. Long Term Care Homes may have scheduling limitations. If large groups are planning to visit at one time, they are encouraged to call the long term care home before visiting.

**Q2: What does Level 1 Family Presence mean?**

**A2:** Level 1 means that each patient can designate two essential family members/supports. These people can both visit the patient but only one person at a time. Additional family members/supports can be designated for intensive care, and palliative care. Two people can be present at one time for intensive care, palliative care, and maternal/children's. The full description of the levels can be found on the Family Presence website.



**Q3: Do I have to wear a mask in SHA facilities after July 11, 2021?**

**A3:** Yes. Medical grade masks are required in all SHA facilities, except LTC, after July 11 as we need to ensure that all of our patients and staff remain safe. This applies to ALL staff including those delivery SHA services in community, like home care. Refusal to wear a mask may result in being denied access to the facility.

**Q4: Does this apply to eye protection?**

**A4:** Yes. SHA will NOT be changing the current continuous masking and eye protection guidelines for Health Care Workers in SHA facilities or performing any SHA service (ex: home care, immunization clinics) based on recommendations from Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC).

**Q5: Why do I have to wear a mask if COVID-19 is over on July 11, 2021?**

**A5:** COVID-19 will not go away on July 11 and will remain a significant medical risk in our province and in our hospitals and other facilities.

**Q6: I'm fully vaccinated so I don't need to wear a mask.**

**A6:** Vaccination status does not cancel the need to wear a mask in SHA facilities. COVID-19, and the Delta Variant, transmission has been documented in health care settings between fully-vaccinated people.

**Q7: Will I still have to answer screening questions when I enter a facility?**

**A7:** Yes. All family members, visitors and staff must still go through COVID-19 screening when entering SHA facilities.

**Q8: I'm an SHA staff member. Do I have to do the fitness for work screening after July 11?**

**A8:** Yes. Because COVID-19 transmission still poses a significant threat to the health of our patients and staff, all staff members must continue to screen for symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, prior to each shift.

**Q9: What precautions do staff have to follow?**

**A9:** The SHA is setting policies that will require staff in long-term care and personal care homes to continue to take recommended precautions to protect residents. This includes staff continuing with masking and use of other personal protective equipment (PPE), screening, and rapid testing.

**Q10: What are you doing to increase the rate of staff vaccination?**

**A10:** We continue to use every available means to encourage staff to receive the vaccine if they haven't already done so. Staff are eligible to receive first and second doses immediately, and we are working towards a high level of vaccine uptake for all health care workers.

**Q11: I'm a physician with privileges at acute care sites. Do I have to continue to mask and be screened when I enter an acute care facility?**

**A11:** Yes. Everyone entering any SHA facility needs to wear a medical grade mask and complete screening upon entry to the facility.



**Q12: Why do I have wear a mask when it is so hot outside?**

**A12:** We know that masking in the summer heat can be a bit uncomfortable but it is important to continue to follow the continuous masking protocols so that we can keep everyone safe from COVID-19.

**Q13: Can people still visit their loved ones if they are not vaccinated?**

**A13:** Yes, but they should wear a mask and maintain two metres of physical distance between them. COVID-19 is still present in Saskatchewan. We need to remain vigilant for the sake of vulnerable residents in care homes.

**Q14: Is it mandatory for unvaccinated visitors to wear masks and physical distance?**

**A14:** These continuing precautions are **highly recommended**. Visitors should sign in for contact tracing purposes, and may indicate whether they are fully vaccinated. Those who do not have a wallet card or printout of their MySaskHealthRecord page can simply leave a signature confirming they are fully vaccinated. Staff will not be expected to enforce masking and adherence to physical distancing in facilities and homes.

**Q15: How did the presence of variants of concern affect this decision?**

**A15:** Evidence suggests that vaccinations are effective against the variants of concern. With 90 per cent of long-term care residents fully vaccinated and no current outbreaks in long-term care facilities, it appears to be safe to allow greater family presence and visitation at this time.

**Q16: Can visitors come from out of province? Are there any other changes to screening?**

**A16:** There are no additional changes to screening. Screening currently does not prevent people from out of province from providing family presence.

**Q17: What will happen if our home goes on suspect or confirmed outbreak? What if there is an increase in transmission in our area?**

**A17:** Local Medical Health Officers will have discretion to re-introduce or maintain restrictions, depending on local circumstances (eg. community transmission, cases within a home, etc.).

**Q18: Are family pets allowed to accompany family when visiting in SHA facilities?**

**A18:** Contact the facility to see if arrangements could be made following their previous pet policy.

**Q19: Do family members/visitors have to social distance in the cafeteria or any commons areas? (or is it advise to if masks are not worn, but not mandatory)**

**A19:** In LTC families may sit together (though we still recommend social distancing especially if not masked). Also it would be recommended to keep groups separate from each other (i.e. resident A and their family kept 2 metres from resident B and their family). However, as mentioned above, if areas are shared with staff, the tables still need to be spaced to allow for distancing. In acute care there is no change (i.e. everyone must still maintain 2 metres distance in common areas and wear a mask (unless actively eating/drinking)).



#### Long Term Care

**Q20: Do I have to wear a mask when I visit Long Term care facilities?**

**A20:** Long Term Care (LTC) Homes are different as these are people's homes. When visiting with residents in LTC, please consider wearing a mask to keep the residents and staff safe from COVID-19, especially when a two-metre physical distance can not be maintained.

**Q21: Why does LTC homes have different rules than other SHA facilities?**

**A21:** Long Term Care (LTC) Homes are different as these are considered people's homes. It is important to provide them the same opportunities to visit family and friends as the rest of the province has.

**Q22: How many family members/visitors can each person in a LTC home have at one time?**

**A22:** There is no limit to the number of family members/visitors that can be present at one time. Long term care homes may have scheduling limitations; families/visitors are encouraged to call ahead. Larger group visits in common areas may have to be scheduled in advance, so please contact the home ahead of time to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate space available. This is the same practice as before the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Q23: Can people arrange large family gatherings?**

**A23:** Larger group visits in common areas may have to be scheduled in advance, so please contact the facility ahead of time to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate space available. This is the same practice as before the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Q24: Can a LTC or PCH resident be taken outside the facility to restaurants, family homes or other gatherings?**

**A24:** Yes. Residents can be taken for outings. Families should consider the risks to their loved one if they are in crowds, or with other family members who may not be vaccinated. Screening will occur when they return.

**Q25: Can residents go on overnight outings?**

**A25:** Overnight outings may also occur unless local restrictions have been placed on the facility or the community, at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer. Screening will occur when they return.

**Q26: Won't this put vulnerable residents of long-term care and personal care homes at risk?**

**A26:** Precautions will continue to be taken to protect residents in care homes. Family and support persons are strongly encouraged to continue to follow the same precautionary measures they followed before July 11<sup>th</sup>. Masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene, temperature screening, immunization and point of care testing continue to provide extra protection for residents and family members/supports.Q1

**Q27: Do I still have to coordinate the timing of my visit?**

**A27:** Please reach out to your home to discuss arranging visits.



- Q28: Do residents still need to social distance in dining rooms? Or can dining go back to normal now that the public health order has been removed?**
- A28:** As per the direction of the ministry, facilities that have not already done so will be able to return to regular routines around meals and services provided; therefore areas used solely for resident dining can return to pre-pandemic operations