



COVID-19

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Resident & Family Handbook

March 19, 2020



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Introduction

The goal of COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Measures at Golden Life Villages is to, as much as possible, prevent the introduction of the virus into the Villages and/or prevent transmission to residents and staff within the Village.

This booklet provides guidance on the rationale behind the infection prevention and control measures taken at Golden Life Villages for COVID-19.

This guidance booklet is based on the latest available scientific evidence about this emerging disease, and may change as new information becomes available. The Public Health Agency of Canada and our health authority partners will be posting regular updates and any relevant information to our residents and families will be updated as a memo to attach to this booklet.

At this time the evidence suggests that the incubation period for COVID-19 is up to 14 days. The length of the infectious period of COVID-19 has not been established. Currently, the criteria for individuals with COVID-19 should be 14 days of isolation after symptom onset or being asymptomatic and having had 2 negative tests 24 hours apart, whichever is shorter. In outbreak situations, where some symptomatic residents may not be tested, the period of isolation is **at the discretion of the Ministry of Health**. Once clinical criteria for the end of isolation are established, this booklet will be updated.

Infection Prevention and Control Practices for COVID-19

To prevent or control the transmission of COVID-19, the following are addressed:

- 1) Screening for symptoms
- 2) Visitors
- 3) Social Activities and Outside Appointments
- 4) Hand Hygiene
- 5) Respiratory Hygiene (also known as Cough Etiquette)
- 6) Droplet / Contact Precautions
- 7) COVID-19 Outbreak

1. Screening for symptoms

Screening families, visitors, staff, service providers as well as residents (returning from appointments or any visit out in the community) for respiratory symptoms will enable staff to implement infection control precautions to prevent transmission within the Village. **Individuals with respiratory symptoms should not enter the Village unless under special circumstances and with the knowledge and pre-approval of the Community Manager.** This includes visitors, family members, staff, and service providers.

Families/ Visitors - To prevent introduction of COVID-19 into the Village screening of families and visitors will occur. Signage is posted at all entrances reminding persons entering the Village to NOT enter if they have symptoms such as fever, cough, difficulty breathing, chills, sore throat, runny nose or sneezing. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please do not enter as it puts our screener, residents and staff at risk. If you have not experienced any symptoms then the second step of screening will include the following:

- completing screening form asking about recent travel history;
- possible contact with an infected person;
- again, asking about symptoms;
- ruling out fever by taking temperatures at the door

Residents - Enhanced screening of residents for respiratory symptoms will be conducted; all residents will be monitored for fever, new cough, difficulty breathing/shortness of breath, in Long Term Care and those residents in Independent Living or Assisted Living are asked to report symptoms immediately to staff on duty.

For any Long Term Care residents with symptoms, the nurse on duty will contact your physician immediately for further direction.

For any Independent and Assisted Living residents, you will be advised to contact family, your physician or call 811 for further direction. Our staff will certainly help contact and communicate the immediate concerns for our residents, if asked.

Staff – Our staff must participate in the same screening prior to each shift and are expected to adhere to strict protocols related to travel and working in other Villages. We understand the risks of cross contamination and have decided that the only way to ensure our residents are safe is to take the highest level of precautions possible.

We are grateful that our staff are in agreement and do not foresee any challenges with staff screening.

**Fever is a symptom of COVID-19 so we appreciate the cooperation of all residents, staff and visitors as we take temperatures. We are committed to using every possible tool to avoid introducing COVID -19 to any of our Villages. We can assure you that we take all appropriate measures to sanitize our thermometers.*

2. Visitors

Developing our visitor protocol has truly been the most difficult aspect of this booklet. It is disheartening for all of us to restrict visitation to our loved ones. We certainly recognize the importance of social interaction and family connection, however, we must weigh the risk to our resident's health against the short-term sacrifice we all must make for our most vulnerable populations.

Visitation will be restricted to **ESSENTIAL VISITORS ONLY**. Essential visitors are those loved ones visiting a critically ill resident. In these special circumstances, only 1 person may visit at a time and no children will be permitted. If you feel that you are an essential visitor or should be an exception to this rule, you must have prior permission from the Community Manager. We appreciate your cooperation as our staff and screeners WILL NOT be allowed to make exceptions without permission. Although a rarity, please note that we will not tolerate abuse of any kind to anyone in our Villages.

If you are in fact deemed an essential visitor, you will still have to follow screening procedure and may have to wear personal protective equipment. Our staff will provide further guidance regarding this if it is applicable.

We would be happy to discuss opportunities for volunteers who would commit to our full screening process and perhaps have a background in health care or senior living. This could be a wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact in our resident's lives. If this is something you are considering, please contact your Community Manager to further discuss.

We are working with our IT department to determine a process of developing opportunities to provide virtual visiting to keep families and residents connected. In the meantime, please let us know if we can assist with skype or Facetime or any messaging applications that you use and that your loved one has access to.

**Social Distancing is a crucially important public health intervention that can help stop coronavirus transmission by avoiding crowds and large gatherings. Best practice requires maintaining a six-foot distance between yourself and others.*

3. Social Activities and Outside Appointments

Our recreation teams will be working to ensure that appropriate activity and interaction is in place. We will practice social distancing and will limit activity sizes and will not be allowing outside entertainment and programming.

During meals at each Village we will be altering delivery to meet social distancing best practices. This may mean that meal times are staggered, dining rooms divided or relocated, or meals may be delivered to suites to best serve the residents.

Protecting our seniors and staff from infection is an enormous challenge. Anyone over the age of 60 is being advised to stay home as much as possible by the Public Health Agency of Canada. For this reason, we strongly advise residents to remain in the Villages and **avoid any outside appointments or activities unless medically necessary**. The risk of infection in the greater community is much higher creating an increased risk of transmission to self, other residents and staff.

We do realize this may be a challenge for our Independent residents who need groceries or to pick up prescriptions, etc. Our staff are happy to assist with ordering groceries online or receiving groceries at the main doors. Many residents will choose to participate in our optional lunch and breakfast programs (when available) rather than continuing to order groceries. Please call a Community Manager if you or your loved ones are interested in these additional services.

Each Village is unique and the needs of each resident vary. Our staff are reaching out to residents daily to ensure their needs are met. While we cannot carry groups on our buses, we can utilize them for driving individual residents to medically necessary appointments. We would rather our residents ride in the safety of our buses and avoid public transportation or taxis. Our buses are sanitized in between riders to ensure minimal risk when out. Please reach out to your Community Manager or Recreation teams for more information as to what your Village can offer.

In the event that you would like to care for your loved one at home during this time, please reach out to the Community Manager for further discussion to determine if it is the right choice for you and your loved one. Please remember that all the screening and travel restrictions will apply upon return.

4. Hand Hygiene

Diligent hand hygiene is essential for all persons entering the Village. Signage with clear instructions to perform hand hygiene are posted throughout the Villages. Alcohol-based hand rub is available at our designated point of access to our Village and at point-of-care in the resident's room. Hand hygiene is required:

- Before preparing, handling, serving or eating food
- After personal body functions
- Before donning (putting on) any personal protective equipment including gown, gloves, facial and eye protection, and after doffing (taking off) personal protective equipment
- Before and after engaging in group activities

In addition to the above all staff are required to clean their hands:

- Before contact with the resident or their environment
- Before doing an aseptic procedure
- After contact with body fluids
- After contact with the resident or their environment

All residents will be reminded to perform hand hygiene, or if residents are unable to perform hand hygiene, our staff will assist as required.

5. Respiratory Hygiene (also known as Cough Etiquette)

The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
- Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Tissues are at our main entrances on our screening tables and waste receptacles are located nearby. Please consider purchasing tissue for your loved ones and dropping them off at our main doors. We are happy to deliver them.

6. Droplet / Contact Precautions

Health Care Workers are trained on how to conduct risk assessments for their safety and the safety of others in the Village. During a respiratory illness outbreak such as

COVID-19 it is especially important that Health Care Workers be vigilant in identifying risk of exposure to respiratory illness pathogens when assisting those who are acutely ill (e.g. fever, cough).

In the event that a resident is deemed a risk due to exhibiting symptoms or has a diagnosis of COVID-19, staff and visitors will be instructed to implement **Droplet and Contact Precautions**. Droplet and Contact Precautions are used for residents with known or suspected infections that are transmitted by respiratory droplets through coughing and sneezing or talking or have an infection that represent an increased risk for contact transmission.

In this case, staff and visitors must wear masks, eye protection, gowns and gloves. If you are deemed an essential visitor, our staff will assist you with this process. Please note that we may not be able to provide the personal protective equipment for visitors to use due to the global shortage of supplies.

7. COVID-19 Outbreak

Despite our best efforts and the cooperation of our residents, families and staff, we must prepare for the possibility of an outbreak. In the event that this does happen, we will communicate that information to you as soon as possible. We ask for your patience as we will be required to follow the Public Health direction and do not have the authority to deviate from any instructions. We will continue to keep you updated and will send out amendments to this booklet if necessary.

We will do our best to ensure our residents are safe, healthy, and enjoying the best quality of life possible. We can only achieve this with your understanding and cooperation. We are committed to keeping you updated and have opened a special link on our goldenlife.ca website for you and your family to get the latest updates from our teams. In addition, we have opened a dedicated email, covid19@glm.ca, and a toll free phone line (866) 466-0852, to respond to any of your questions or comments.