



PANDEMIC PRIORITIES:

Questions for Families
to Ask During COVID-19

April 2020

INTRODUCTION

The unprecedented escalation of the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to transform our lives, forcing us to restructure our daily routines and how we interact with our global community. Physical and social distancing have become the norm, to ensure we all do our part to flatten the curve and to stop the spread of the virus.

With the recent directives for implementing these measures, long-term care homes across Ontario have suspended visitation. This has understandably created concerns for families of residents who routinely played an active role in the care and lives of their loved ones residing there.

As we navigate this period of uncertainty, it is important that family members feel assured and confident in the care their loved ones are receiving.

The recently released tool called "*Quick-10 Family Support Check In*" ([www.fco.ngo/Quick 10](http://www.fco.ngo/Quick10)) created in partnership by Family Councils Ontario, Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, and CanAGE is a valuable resource to support family caregivers to check in on the status of their loved one in LTC.

This booklet provides additional questions for families to consider when speaking to front-line staff at LTC Homes.



HIGH PRIORITY QUESTIONS

Since LTC homes are experiencing higher than normal call volumes, there are limitations of time, or available staff to field those calls. It is helpful to be well prepared for the discussions, with staff to make the most of those conversations to get the information **YOU** need.

Every resident's care is unique. When families take the time to evaluate the needs of loved ones and any issues arising those conversations can then address what is most pressing and those issues can then be discussed around care planning.

Family members are concerned about the quality of care being provided and the questions provided in this booklet provide a framework for this conversation.



Information Families Want to Know

Overall Wellness & Hygiene

- Are there signs my loved one is feeling low, down, or troubled?
- Is my loved one having issues with their regular sleep routine?
- What is being done to prevent social isolation and loneliness?
- Does my loved one appear alert?
- Is there a significant change in their language, cognitive or motor skills?
- How are my loved one's hygiene needs being taken care of?
- Has my loved one recently suffered an injury or a fall?
- Does my loved one have enough clean clothes and linen?
- Is my loved one having any incontinence issues?
- How often is my loved one being bathed/showered?
- How often is my loved one being toileted?
- Does the home have an adequate supply of incontinence products/briefs?

Nutrition

- What procedures have been implemented for dining in light of COVID-19?
- Do staff help residents eat/drink at mealtime if they need help?
- Do the residents still have a choice for what they eat at mealtime?
- Is my loved one being encouraged to drink liquids to stay hydrated? If they require thickened fluids and assistance is this happening ?
- Has there been a change in my loved ones nutritional needs and ability to chew/swallow?
- If there have been changes, has a swallowing assessment been conducted and their diet modified?
- Is my loved one losing weight? Will I be informed if this occurs?

Care Plans & Routines

- Is the care plan for my loved one still being followed?
- Are care plan meetings still taking place? If so, how often? Can I participate virtually?
- Can I be notified of any updates or changes in my loved ones care or routines via e-mail or phone?
- What is the current process to assess and re-assess a resident's need for services?
- How is my loved one coping with changes in programming?

Information Families want to Know

Records and Complex Care Needs

- Will there be time for staff to address my loved one's complex care needs?
- Are residents able to see a doctor if needed?
- If the home has a Nurse Practitioner, can my loved one be evaluated by them?
- Does the home have an arrangement to transfer residents to nearby hospitals if needed? If yes, which ones? What measures will be taken to lower transfer distress?
- Will staff be able to give medication in a timely manner?
- Have there been any changes to the medication given to my loved one?
- If my loved one experiences increased anxiety, depression or agitation is the social worker or BSO team available to assist?

Staffing in the Long-term Care Home

- Do the nurses/PSWs/aides take care of the same group of residents?
- How are staff assigned work within the home?
- Are there enough staff working in the home to respond to the needs of my loved one given the current circumstances?
- If there is a staffing shortage in the home, what is being done to address this?
- Is there a specific member of the staff I can contact to obtain an update on my loved one?
- Are you confident that staff have adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to safely perform their job?
- What personal protective equipment are staff using?

Family Support and Action Line

For additional assistance, families can reach out to the Ministry of Long-term Care Family Support and Action line (7 days/week) to receive information or raise concerns during COVID-19.

1-866-434-0144



Family Councils Ontario

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CanAge 

The "*Pandemic Priorities: Questions for Families to Ask during COVID-19*" was developed by Family Councils Ontario, Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, CanAGE as part of a collaborative partnership rooted in crisis resolution. Together, we will help many!