**What can HSC operators do to reduce risk of infection at your homes?**

To reduce the risk of infection and ensure ongoing service capacity, it is recommended that all homes implement the following measures:

* Please check the Ministry of Health (MOH) COVID-19 website regularly for updates on the COVID-19 situation and other important information:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

* Implement social distancing strategies at your home where feasible

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-guide-isolation-caregivers.pdf?la=en>

* Clean and disinfect all high touch surfaces (toilets and sinks, door handles (including refrigerator), kitchen surfaces and small appliances, light switches, telephones, remote controls. These areas should be cleaned twice a day using a store-bought cleaner and disinfectant
* Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, bed linen, cigarettes, unwashed eating utensils, drinks, phones, computers, remote controls, or other electronic devices. Clean items that must be used by several people between uses (e.g. remote control, telephones)
* Ensure strict hand washing practices are in place for all tenants, staff and essential visitors in the home (include posters in washrooms to remind about handwashing, hand washing tutorials, etc.)
  + Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:
* Before and after preparing food
* Before and after eating
* After using the toilet
* After disposing of waste or handling dirty laundry
* Whenever hands look dirty
* Plain soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene
* If soap and water are not available, hands can be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, ensuring that all surfaces of the hands are covered (e.g. front and back of hands as well as between fingers) and rub them together until they feel dry
* When drying hands, disposable paper towels are preferred, but a cloth towel used by only one person may be used
* Ask tenants to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing or cough or sneeze into the bend of the arm, not the hand. They should dispose of any tissues that they used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash their hands afterwards
* Support tenants with family reunification where possible to reduce their risk of exposure. It must be clear to tenants and families that reunification is for the **duration** of the COVID-19 crisis and the tenant will not be able to come back to the HSC once they have returned home to family until after the crisis is over
* Tenants should not leave the home for short-stay absences to visit family and friends. Instead, tenants who wish to go outside of the home should remain on the property grounds and maintain safe social distancing
* Plan enhanced in-house recreation (ideally planned structured activities) to encourage tenants to stay in the home – discuss strategies with other homes and your HSC office to encourage tenants to remain at home – share any good ideas you have so best practices are shared. Where a tenant continues to leave the home, plan together with that tenant’s support network on strategies to encourage the tenant to remain at home. Ensure the tenant washes their hands on their return to the home
* Eliminate non-essential visitors and service providers to your home and screen all visitors on entry to the premises. Post the sign from the Chief Medical Officer of Health at the doorway to the home (attached). Please use the screening tool provided by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (attached). Visitors that fail screening will not be permitted
* Suspend all non-essential services entering the home
* As much as possible, arrange for delivery service for essential items (e.g. food, prescriptions, etc.)
* Eliminate purchase of bus passes at this time
* If some tenants pick up cigarette butts, remove cigarettes butts from outside areas of the home daily or as required

**How can HSC operators encourage social distancing in your homes?**

HSC operators are encouraged to implement any of the following best practices at your home:

* Increase spacing between beds where possible
* Arrange beds so that individuals lay head-to-toe (or toe-to-toe)
* Use neutral barriers (e.g. foot lockers, curtains) to create barriers between beds
* Stagger mealtimes to reduce crowding in dining room
* Create a schedule for using common spaces

**How do HSC operators prepare for the possibility of a tenant getting COVID-19?**

* Purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) where possible including:
  + Masks, gloves, gowns, goggles, hand sanitizers, virus wipes
* Review the proper use of personal protective equipment (see second page of attached checklist)
* Designate and be ready to prepare a bedroom/space to be an isolation room/area – purchase equipment (commode, urinals, bedpan, cleaning supplies) for isolation room/area. Ideally this would be a room that is currently not being occupied as a bedroom. Where isolation in the home is not feasible, please discuss with your HSC Office
* Complete a *Medical Information Form* (attached) for each tenant in the home in case a tenant needs to go to a COVID-19 Assessment Centre, be isolated away from the home, or be hospitalized
* Know where the closest COVID-19 Assessment Centre is located

**How do HSC operators monitor the health of tenants?**

* Know the symptoms of COVID-19 -- fever, new cough, difficulty breathing (struggling for each breath, cannot hold breath for more than 10 seconds), muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose
* Take and record each tenant’s temperature daily
* Record how tenants say they are feeling each day

**What should HSC operators do if a tenant has been exposed to someone diagnosed with/suspected COVID-19?**

* Tenant self-isolates in isolation bedroom room (if available). Monitor symptoms for 14 days after exposure. If the tenant does not experience symptoms after 14 days, they can be moved from self-isolation and practice social distancing
* If another tenant needs the isolation room because they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, the exposed (first) tenant is moved for the isolation room and practices social distancing

**What should HSC operators do if he/she or any of the HSC staff experiences COVID-19 symptoms?**

* HSC operator or staff who are sick and have symptoms of COVID-19 (see above) should stay home and not go to the HSC
* A sick HSC operator or staff should not attend the HSC until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours
* An HSC operator or staff who begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 while at the HSC should put on a mask and gloves, separate themselves from others immediately, ensure appropriate coverage at the HSC, leave the HSC and seek heath care services by contacting Telehealth Ontario or their doctor
* If the HSC operator lives in the HSC, they should self-isolate and not be in contact with tenants until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours

**What do HSC operators do if a tenant shows symptoms of COVID-19?**

**If a tenant is having severe difficulty breathing (struggling for each breath, speaking in single words), severe chest pain, having a very hard time waking up, feeling confused, lost consciousness, call 911**

If a tenant shows milder symptoms of COVID-19 -- fever, new cough, difficulty breathing (struggling for each breath, cannot hold breath for more than 10 seconds), muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose:

* Use the *Checklist Homes for Special Care Tenants Experiencing Mild Symptoms of Covid-19* (attached)

**How can HSC operators get involved with locally planning around COVID-19, including isolation of tenants off-site if required?**

* Your HSC Office will assist you with connecting with local partners involved in planning for off-site isolation (where planning is in process)