

Food Service Planning – Communal Dining Considerations

This is a **LIVING DOCUMENT** that will be updated as needed. Last updated: **May 20, 2021**

Purpose: Best practices to consider for Communal Dining during a pandemic based on the newest changes May 4, 2021 to COVID-19 Directive #3 for Long Term Care Homes under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*.

- 1) **Updated Directive 3 and Guidance Document FAQ**
[FAQ](#)
- 2) **Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the long-term Care Homes Act, 2007**
[Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes](#)
- 3) **COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario**
[COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario | Ontario.ca](#) (English)

MOH Directive #3	Further Practices to Consider
<p>Before Meal Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When not eating or drinking, Residents are encouraged to wear a mask where possible or tolerated¹ • No buffet style service is provided¹ • Residents are cohorted and seating arrangements are consistent in the dining room from meal to meal¹ 	<p><u>Sanitation & Infection Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap utensils in serviettes in kitchen to minimize touching <p><u>Physical Distancing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a system for portering Residents to their seat – Residents should not be lined up closely together waiting for meals • Consider one-way traffic for staff when seating Residents • Seating plan is posted and followed. Any changes in the seating plan are updated and posted <p><u>Hand Hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and Residents to complete hand hygiene before entering the dining room • Hand hygiene is performed after assisting a Resident and moving to another activity such as touching a walking aide/wheelchair • All staff complete hand hygiene before serving • Recommendation to assign a staff member to stand at the entrance of dining area (with Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer) to assist all Residents with hand hygiene
<p>During Meal Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No shared serving spoons or shared utensils are used¹ • When not eating or drinking, Residents are encouraged to wear a mask where possible or tolerated¹ • Frequent hand hygiene of Residents and staff (including essential caregivers and volunteers) assisting with feeding should be undertaken¹ 	<p><u>Sanitation & Infection Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different carts for serving and clearing • Have one staff serve and another staff clear dishes for consistency of task • When serving or assisting Residents, do not touch the eating/drinking surfaces of cutlery, glasses and dishes (i.e. rim of cup, inside of plate, tines of fork) <p><u>Hand Hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand hygiene is performed after assisting a Resident with cleaning their face and hands with a disposable wipe/cloth and before assisting another Resident • Staff use proper hand washing techniques after clearing dishes between courses • Post signage on the importance of hand hygiene near dining room, as per

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Distancing measures are in place in the dining room (2 meters between Residents)¹ Fully immunized staff and essential caregivers may accompany a fully immunized Resident for meals by joining the Resident's cohort regardless of whether the home has met an 85% Resident and 70% employee immunization rate¹ Additional flexibility should be introduced where homes have met an 85% Resident and 70% employee immunization coverage rate. In these instances, physical distancing can be suspended in cohorted groups for the duration of the dining period¹ 	<p>Home's specific direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend routine Audits of staff performance of assisting Residents with hand hygiene upon entry and exit to the dining room <p>Physical Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider one-way traffic for staff when serving and clearing dishes <p>Seating Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread out the Resident's table and chairs 2 meters apart Can use over-bed tables, small tables or table trays on wheelchair (if approved), if needed Get creative with dining area locations Tracking system to be adjusted to monitor which Residents have consumed their meal before next seating (if having multiple seating times) Residents at high risk for choking/dysphagia may need to be in a setting where they can be monitored <p>If Having Difficulties with All Residents Dining at Once</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have several seating times - stagger or flex meal times as needed Create a schedule and have Residents dine in the dining room one meal per day - rotate which Resident cohorts attend which meal Have a BBQ once a week and rotate Resident cohorts each week to join Implement a Harvest Table – designate a large table for cohorted Residents to dine together with physical distancing in place
<p>After Meal Service</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When not eating or drinking, Residents are encouraged to wear a mask where possible or tolerated¹ <p>What Happens in an Outbreak?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a long-term care home has a confirmed outbreak, as declared by the local public health unit, all communal dining must be suspended in the affected area or cohort until the local public health unit directs otherwise¹ 	<p>Sanitation & Infection Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a Clearing Station - Separate dish cart is available for clearing dirty dishes away from serving carts Have a Sanitation Bucket available on the dish cart. Utensils are placed in bucket immediately as they are being cleared Dining room is cleaned after each meal - appropriate sanitizing solution is used for tables and chairs Ensure to follow your policy & procedures and cleaning schedule for cleaning and disinfecting, especially, <u>High Touch</u> areas; tables, chairs, handles, knobs, light switches, carts, hand sinks, soap and sanitizer dispensers, POC screens/tablets, waste receptacles, plexi glass, etc. Dish machine's temperature and chemical levels are checked routinely as per schedule Do not return unused food to the kitchen – discard <p>Hand Hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Residents complete hand hygiene before <u>exiting</u> the dining room All staff complete hand hygiene after handling dirty dishes and in between helping residents Suggest to assign a staff member to stand at the entrance of dining area (with Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer) to assist all Residents when leaving the dining area

Tray Service	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent hand hygiene of Residents and staff (including essential caregivers and volunteers) assisting with feeding should be undertaken¹ 	<p><u>Sanitation & Infection Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Tray Service if Home is in Covid-19 Outbreak All items on the trays are covered and labeled If Residents are in isolation or receiving tray service in their rooms, dishes are collected/disposed of on a separate dish cart with appropriate PPE <p><u>Physical Distancing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When delivering trays, continue to follow cohorting guidelines <p><u>Hand Hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff complete hand hygiene before tray delivery Residents are assisted with hand hygiene before receiving their tray Post signage on the importance of hand hygiene, as per Home’s specific direction Assign a staff member to assist with hand hygiene for those receiving tray service within their cohort
Snack Service	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent hand hygiene of Residents and staff (including essential caregivers and volunteers) assisting with feeding should be undertaken¹ 	<p><u>Sanitation & Infection Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper food handling techniques are used by staff (i.e. tongs, scoops) <p><u>Physical Distancing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohorting guidelines continued to be followed during Snack Service <p><u>Hand Hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have available Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer on all snack carts Staff to perform hand hygiene prior to serving food or beverages from the snack cart Staff to perform hand hygiene after handling soiled dishes Staff to perform hand hygiene is performed before and after assisting Residents with their snack and beverage Staff to assist Residents with hand hygiene before and after eating/drinking

Note: Applying physical distancing to dining is not a one size fits all approach, so it is important that you follow your Home’s or organization’s specific recommendations and Public Health Unit guidance.

***Refer to Checklist for Communal Dining During the Pandemic to help with executing and monitoring these recommendations**

References:

- (1) Ontario. (2021, May 4). COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario. *Activities: Communal Dining as of May, 2021*. Retrieved from: https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-guidance-document-long-term-care-homes-ontario?utm_source=newsroom&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%2Fen%2Frelease%2F1000065%2Fontario-responds-to-high-vaccination-rates-modifies-restrictions-in-long-term-care-homes&utm_term=public
- (2) Ministry of Health. (2021, May 4). COVID-19 Directive #3 for Long Term Care Homes under the *Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007*. Retrieved from: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/LTCH_HPPA.pdf