

Inpatient Staff Support – FAQ (Updated July 16, 2020)

We have developed the below FAQ, which staff can reference as a script, to help navigate conversations with inpatient clients and families.

While there may not always be an immediate answer available, please be solutions-focused in your approach. Acknowledge the question, concern, feedback and let the family know that Holland Bloorview will endeavour to address them as best and as soon as they can in light of changing protocols/practices/guidelines around COVID-19.

Please feel free to also reference our [All Staff FAQ](#).

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Inpatient rooms – sanitation practices and room upgrades

Are family caregivers required to stay in the room with their child or loved one or can they walk around the unit or hospital with their child or loved one? What are the restrictions?

Family caregivers have access to the inpatient family lounge and laundry area, therapy areas, cafeteria, and 3rd floor terraces outdoors. In line with our masking policy, family caregivers must wear a mask at all times when physical distancing of at least 2 meters (6 feet) is not possible. Family caregivers must continue to practice proper hand washing.

When required, a family caregiver designate can book transportation at the main reception desk near the hospital's entrance, for grocery and pharmacy runs. Please inquire with main reception to book one of our pre-selected dates and times for pick-up/drop-off.

If my child or loved one is in a 4-person or semi-private room, what precautions are being taken to ensure the other client caregivers do not contaminate my child's area?

Inpatient rooms are cleaned daily and garbage is removed twice daily.

Every child receiving our care, along with their caregiver at the bedside, is assessed daily and if any are showing symptoms, their care team will share details on proper precautions to take, or if possible, will move the child into isolation until further notice.

When children share rooms, we will do our very best to prevent spread to a roommate by using our protective equipment, washing our hands often, and cleaning shared equipment between use. Families can also help prevent the spread by not visiting when sick, wearing a mask, and washing their hands often.

Can my child or loved one be moved to a private room at this time?

During a pandemic, we often use private rooms for isolation to prevent the spread of viruses to a roommate if they are showing symptoms of fever, cough, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, muscle aches/pains, vomiting or diarrhea. Single rooms are also offered to those who have an antibiotic resistance to bacteria that can be spread from person to person. When in these rooms, staff will wear protective equipment when caring for these children.

When single rooms are not available, we will do our very best to prevent spread of viruses to a roommate by using protective equipment, washing our hands, and cleaning shared equipment between use. Families can also help prevent the spread of viruses by not visiting when sick, wearing a mask, and frequently washing their hands.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 - isolation protocols, staff testing

Are new hospital admissions being accepted? If so, are they subject to a 14-day isolation to prevent potential spread of COVID-19?

Children coming to us are being screened as part of admission and monitored regularly. Client admissions from home will be placed in isolation and both the child and their family caregiver(s) will be tested for COVID-19. In the interim, they will remain in isolation for approximately 48 hours or until their test results come back negative.

Are members of my child's care team being tested for COVID-19?

Front-line staff are not being proactively tested for COVID-19. Rest assured that any staff who gets tested and is awaiting results will not be permitted to work until they can confirm that they have been tested negative and do not have the virus.

Staff are required to complete a self-screening form online every 7 days and must show the screeners their email confirmation before being allowed into the building.

What happens if my child or loved one begins to experience symptoms related to COVID-19?

Any child on the inpatient floor showing symptoms of COVID-19 will immediately be placed in isolation and will be tested. Based on guidance from Toronto Public Health, if the test is positive, the child's family caregiver and the roommate (if there was one), along with their family caregiver, may also be tested and isolated for 14 days.

All staff entering the room are required to wear proper PPE.

What if I begin to experience symptoms and I am my child or loved one's only caregiver?

If you are at the hospital or at home and begin to experience symptoms, please notify your child or loved one's care team **immediately**. We ask that you please go or stay home and wait for further instructions from your child's care team. We understand that potentially being away from your child or loved one may be a very scary thought, but it is important that parents or family caregivers take care of themselves too. While we won't be able to replicate the role you play at bedside, your child or loved one's care team is here to offer support should you need to self-isolate.

What types of warnings will the hospital share with caregivers who do not follow masking, physical distancing expectations?

We want to encourage and coach families to participate in masking and physical distancing of 2 meters (6 feet). We understand this can be challenging to do day after day and appreciate your patience and diligence in following the guidance we provide. Beyond the conversations we have, we can only ask for your support in being consistent with the policies we have.

In doing so, you help us keep our entire community of inpatient families and Holland Bloorview staff safe. If for some reason, this is challenging, please bring it to your care team's attention so we can proactively problem solve. We do permit parents to get a break and go mask free so they can be close to their loved one. Many stay overnight, so it also makes it easier to sleep.

In addition to masking, we have a number of measures to protect our clients, their families and staff:

- Anyone coming into the building is screened for symptoms and other factors that might promote virus spread
- Caregivers staying overnight and not leaving the hospital are also screened daily

Please let your care team know if you notice someone not wearing a mask. We are happy to work with families to understand their perspective and help them adhere to the policy.

Do any members of my care team work at multiple sites? Should I be concerned?

If a member of your care team worked at a hospital that had an outbreak, but they did not work on the affected unit, they can continue to work at Holland Bloorview. The only exception is for respiratory therapists (RTs). RTs always wear high levels of personal protective equipment (PPE) and they can report to work at Holland Bloorview as long as they have no symptoms of COVID-19. Since RTs are in high demand at this time, this policy allows us to continue to meet the needs of our clients and ensures we have proper staffing during all shifts.

Will families be notified if a client, caregiver or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? If so, how will this be communicated?

- A client or family member that tests positive will be informed of their test result by their physician.
- Due to client confidentiality we will not be releasing the name of the client or family member.
- Family members who test positive will be asked to return home and identify an additional caregiver that can be onsite.
- Similarly, due to confidentiality of personal health information, if a staff person tests positive we would not release the name of that individual.
- We will communicate with families if we have a COVID-positive case via letter and in-person rounding.

When is Spiral Garden off limits to inpatient families?

Inpatient families can access Spiral Garden starting from 1:30 p.m. onward. **The garden itself and doors exiting into the garden (near the conference centre) will be restricted to program participants from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on weekdays.** The bathrooms located near the east side of the pool will also be restricted to program participants during that time.

Limit to family caregivers onsite

Why did Holland Bloorview temporarily reduce the number of family caregivers allowed in the hospital?

Reducing the number of family caregivers in the hospital was a directive that we received from the Ministry of Health in Ontario early on in the pandemic. We know from listening to your lived experiences that in-person caregiver support is extremely important for the well-being of your loved one and your family.

We have been closely monitoring the number of COVID-19 cases in Toronto and surrounding areas, which are now remaining steadily below 100 cases. We have also seen a consistent reduction in outbreaks across the province in long-term care homes and hospitals.

With these facts in mind, we are pleased to announce changes to our Family and Caregiver Presence Policy, effective July 16th. To summarize:

- Each client can now have up to 3 individuals over the age of 16 be identified as designated caregivers and come onsite and visit their loved one. Everyone must still undergo screening to ensure safety for all. Please reach out to a member of your care team to add someone to your designated caregivers list.
- Up to 2 designated caregivers over the age of 16 can be onsite to visit their loved one from 8am to 11pm.
- One caregiver may remain overnight starting at 11pm. No change from current practice.

We hope these changes will allow easier handover between caregivers, facilitate any necessary or desired training (for equipment, medications, etc.) and allow for easier participation in family/team meetings.

Also, effective since June 30th, caregivers are no longer required to wait 24 hours before switching out with a second designated caregiver – the switch can happen at any time.

Note for inpatient staff: We will no longer be swabbing caregivers upon admission, which will facilitate the switching out process. Nurses will screen the caregivers of the children in their care on a daily basis and we will continue to enforce physical distancing, screening and masking measures.

How long will these strict measures be in place at the hospital?

You may have become aware that SickKids has moved to allowing two family caregivers at the bedside. We want you to know that ministry guidance for acute care hospitals and rehabilitation hospitals are different. As well, the design of the inpatient rooms in acute care hospitals, like SickKids, is different than Holland Bloorview (e.g. more private rooms). At this time, we are continuing to follow our guidance

from the ministry around having only **one** caregiver present at the bedside. We will be sure to notify you as soon as a change or loosening of this expectation takes place.

Weekend passes/LOAs

When can we see changes to the LOAs/weekend passes policy?

Our team has developed a process to ensure that you and your loved one feel supported and are set up for success when out in the community. **Effective the weekend of July 17-19, a select number of clients will be granted a weekend pass for home assessments in preparation for discharge.** We will be taking a phased approach to test out the use of leaves of absence (LOA)/weekend passes before making them widely available.

If you are interested in weekend passes, please let your physician or nurse practitioner know, well in advance. Depending on clinical needs and resources it may take longer to ensure a safe pass. It is important to know that no rehabilitation hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area are offering LOAs or weekend passes at this time. As such, we are taking a systematic approach to consider all of the issues at hand including:

- Infection prevention and control measures to protect you and your loved one
- Availability of resources your loved one may need out in the community
- LOAs to be used in a therapeutic manner to bring about benefits and minimize harm

Although our communities are in either recovery Stage 2 or 3, COVID-19 is still active. While on a weekend pass, we encourage families to maintain a social bubble and continue to follow safe infection prevention and control precautions as outlined in our handout. Prior to returning to the hospital, you will receive a phone call from your nurse to complete a screening assessment.

Just a reminder that iPads are available on the units so clients can virtually stay connected with friends and family during this time. There is currently one available in the Teen Lounge.

What do I need to know before I go out on a Weekend Pass or LOA?

- While preparing to go out on a Weekend Pass or LOA, please ensure that there are no sick/ill family members at home prior to leaving the hospital. Symptoms to watch for (not related to their condition) include:
 - Fever
 - Dry cough
 - Extreme tiredness
 - Sore throat
 - Chills
 - Headache or muscle pains

- Keep your social bubble to the same group of 10 people or less as per the recommendations by the Ministry of Health.
- If community providers are coming into your home (e.g. nurses, personal support workers, therapists, etc.), ensure that they are wearing masks and applying hand sanitizer before entering your home and during their visit as needed.
- If you are going out into the community, please wear a mask if you are unable to keep 2 meters (6 feet) away from others. Feel free to read our family tip sheet on “What to do if your child cannot wear a mask” here: <https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/family-workshops-resources/family-resource-centre/online-family-resources-centre/masking-tips>.
- If you, your loved one or any member of your family becomes ill while out on a Weekend Pass, please call your unit for guidance prior to returning to the hospital.
- In preparation for your return back to your hospital room, you will be screened three times:
 - Via telephone prior to your return;
 - at Main Reception when you enter the hospital;
 - and once again with the nursing staff on your loved one’s unit.
- If you need support travelling with your loved one to and from the community, talk to a member of your care team about our Emergency Transit Fund and how it can help.

Indoor/Outdoor Visits Policy

How often can we book a request for indoor and outdoor visits?

We ask that every family **limit their visits to two per week** to allow all families a chance to visit. Some of the window visit times have been replaced by the indoor visit times on Monday to Friday evenings. Window visits can still occur daily Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. Bookings for window visits are through the clerical assistants on each unit and not through the Pick-A-Time system.

We are exploring more areas where visits with families can occur while balancing the needs of other programs that are running at the same time. We want to make sure we have the proper resources in place to ensure that the visits are safe for everyone. More details to come.

How many people can take part in a visit?

A total of six (6) people can take part in a visit, **including the client**. The client and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are to identify the visitors upon booking. All visitors will be screened at the main entrance. Anyone that doesn't pass screening will not be allowed to visit.

If you wish to request an exception to the number of visitors, please e-mail inpatientcaregivers@hollandbloorview.ca. A response will be given within 3 business days.

Do we still need to mask or physically distance?

During the visit, if your family members and loved ones are within the same "bubble" or circle as identified by Public Health, you do not need to mask or keep physically distant. Those that aren't within your circle must mask or maintain a physical distance of 2 meters.

Please note that a mask must be worn from the screening tables to the location of your visit and must be worn when leaving the location of your visit to the exit of the building. This requirement is as directed through Public Health and Holland Bloorview guidelines. In addition, all visitors over the age of six (6) must wear masks. With the exception of:

- Persons who are unable to place or remove a mask or face covering without assistance.
- Persons with an underlying medical condition, which inhibits the ability to wear a mask or face covering.

Visitors unable to wear a mask for any of the above reasons need to be identified prior to the visit so other measures can be put in place to protect the safety of everyone. Visitors are responsible for bringing their own mask for indoor and outdoor visits. If visitors do not have their own, a mask will be provided. Cloth masks are at Main Reception and medical masks are at the screening desks.

What do I need to know about booking a visit?

Caregivers need to notify their care team of their request for a visit ***at least 24 hours in advance*** (especially if a nurse is required to accompany your child) and ***just before heading downstairs for an indoor/outdoor visit***. Visits may be booked online through the Pick-a-Time system – you can ask a clerical assistant if you need help with the booking. When booking a visit, please use the links below:

- (1) For **INDOOR** visits – hollandbloorview.ca/indoor-visits
- (2) For **OUTDOOR** visits – hollandbloorview.ca/outdoor-visits

- Please print or save your confirmation e-mail. Please note that designated staff (e.g., trach/vent trained staff) may be required to accompany the client and/or caregiver during the visit. Please be aware, that due to the complex nature of these clients and the needs of the Complex

Continuing Care unit, visits may be cancelled last minute due to circumstances beyond control.

- The names and contact information of all those that will be visiting will be required, as per public health guidelines, to allow for contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Caregivers at the bedside are responsible for taking their loved one to and from an indoor or outdoor visit. They are to meet their family/visitors at Main Reception. In the absence of a caregiver, a nurse will be performing this duty. If your loved one is independent and able to leave the unit on their own, they must inform the nursing staff of their expected return time prior to leaving the unit.
- For questions or concerns contact Eric Smart at extension 3326 and please leave your contact information on voice mail.

Are these visits supervised and are there designated areas for indoor and outdoor visits?

No, they are not supervised, rather, volunteers will oversee both the indoor and outdoor visits and will escort family caregivers/visitors to the designated visiting areas:

- Indoors: pre-selected classrooms in the Bloorview School Authority
- Outdoors: Pavilion area in the Spiral Garden (northeast end of the parking lot)

Volunteers will ensure that screening, hand hygiene and masks are worn to and from the visit locations. Volunteers are not clinical staff, and do not have access to clients' medical records. They cannot provide medical or first aid assistance. In the event of an urgent care situation during a visit, the volunteer will assist with notifying staff who can provide emergency care.

Indoor and outdoor visits are allocated a certain time period, and to a designated area that will be clearly identified and fully accessible. Visitors will not be permitted to any other area inside of the hospital (we are allowing access to washrooms). Families with younger children will need to supervise them from wandering.

What is the time limit for visits?

50-minute timeslots are available. In between visits, the visitor area (tables, chairs, etc.) will be cleaned and sanitized. A volunteer will remind you 5 minutes before your visit time is ending. We ask that you exit at the designated time, to allow for cleaning and preparing the visit location for the next group. As we have just launched the visiting program we will be monitoring the process and may make adjustments to the visiting or cleaning times and will notify families through the Pick-A-Time system.

What happens when members of the visiting group are running late?

Kindly remind your family members/visitors to come on time for the visit as the visiting group will only be escorted to the designated area when all members have arrived and have been screened. Visits may need to be forfeited and rescheduled if running 15 minutes late.

How do I cancel my visit if I'm unable to attend?

If you are unable to attend your visit, please cancel by logging into the Pick-a-Time website to release the spot.

If you have an outdoor visit scheduled, and would like to rebook due to inclement weather, please cancel your appointment by logging into the Pick-a-Time website. You can then book another date/time. **Please note that we cannot guarantee a spot for indoor visits on days when inclement weather occurs.**

Meal options

What food options are available to inpatient families?

To prevent families from leaving the hospital to find their own meals, Holland Bloorview has made arrangements to provide complimentary dinner for all family caregivers.

Free frozen meals

These are available to all inpatient families on-demand in the mini freezer located inside the kitchen on the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (BIRT) unit. Please note the limit of **one meal** per family, per day. For food safety reasons, these meals should be consumed within one hour of removing them from the mini freezer.

Family-sized pre-packaged meals

These can also be pre-ordered for purchase to take home, if/when needed. Menus will be posted in the café downstairs. Please e-mail Chef Todd McKinnon at tmckinnon@hollandbloorview.ca by 5pm daily for next-day pick-up in the café between 2-3 p.m.

You are also welcome to bring or order your own food for delivery. We ask that, like everywhere else in the hospital, that you respect physical distancing practices when dining in common areas. There should be signage in these areas to provide clear directions on what that may look like.

Grocery to Go Program

We are bringing the grocery essentials to you via our new Pop-Up Grocery store! Located in the salad bar area of The Garden Grill, you'll find fresh produce, dairy products, along with everyday pantry items

– all pre-packaged and marked at grocery store prices. Hours of operation are: Monday-Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Masking policy

What is the family caregiver mask policy?

All family caregivers are expected to wear a mask at all times where physical distancing of at least 2 meters (6 feet is not possible).

We are allowing all visitors and inpatient and outpatient families the choice of wearing their own cloth masks while at Holland Bloorview. For those without masks or for those that feel more comfortable with wearing our procedural masks, we will continue to provide them at screening. This decision was made based on guidance from Toronto Public Health that cloth masks are an effective means to prevent infection spread in addition to hand washing/sanitizing and physical distancing. Cloth masks provided by community groups are available at Main Reception (max. one per family member).

You can only remove your mask if you are physically distanced from others in the following areas:

- inpatient room (i.e. when you are eating or sleeping)
- family lounges on the 3rd floor
- cafeteria
- reflection room
- bathroom
- outside (i.e. Spiral Garden, outdoor terraces on the 3rd floor)

Physical distancing is not required between you and your loved one (i.e. you do not need to wear masks around each other) unless if/when they are receiving aerosol generating medical procedures. Ask your care team if this applies to you and your loved one.

Does my loved one need to wear a mask?

We have listened to your concerns and feedback on the masking of inpatient clients. We want you to know that the effectiveness of child masking depends on many factors including age, ability, willingness, and safety. Generally, children 6 years and older can wear a mask safely. You may have experienced masking of children at other hospitals.

With the infection prevention and control measures we have put in place, we feel confident that we are doing our best to keep our community safe. However, with the ramping up of services and people in the building it might become harder to maintain physical distancing. Therefore, as an extra precaution, if you feel your loved one is willing and able to wear a mask safely while outside of their room, one can be provided for them.

Masks will be available at the nursing station on each unit and at the screening desk at the main entrance. Instructions on how to properly put on, take off, and store a mask are available. At no time

will a client be asked to wear a mask if their safety could be put at risk. Your care team may suggest alternatives for children who are not able to wear one.

What is the evidence behind masking? If masks are meant to be preserved and families will be putting them on and taking them off throughout the day, won't the masks cause greater risk for picking up and spreading the virus?

Masking someone who may potentially be infectious or sick with the virus can protect those around them from getting the virus. Instructions on how to put on and take off the mask is meant to decrease the risk of spreading infections.

When taking off the mask, remove it by the elastic ear loops – do not touch the front of the mask. When you have to take the mask off, it is important to place it on a clean surface or paper towel, with the inside of the mask facing up. When putting the mask back on, first wash your hands, then pick up the mask and place it over your nose and mouth and adjust to fit. Then wash your hands again. Try to avoid touching the outside of the mask – if you do, wash your hands.

How can we best preserve the life of the masks we are given?

Family caregivers staying at bedside engage in daily screening on the unit. If your mask is still suitable to wear (i.e. isn't visibly soiled, isn't moist or difficult to breathe in), we ask that you please re-use it and let your screener know that you don't need a new mask.

To help conserve your mask when not in use, especially if and when you leave the hospital to return home, we suggest preserving your mask, if still suitable to wear, in a paper bag. These are available at the screening desks.

A reminder that when you're ready to dispose of your mask, please place it in the appropriately marked bins and then thoroughly wash or sanitize your hands.

What happens if the mask provided to me is loose?

It has come to our attention that for some family members, the masks we provide at the screening desks do not fit as well as they could. Unfortunately due to limitations in supply we are unable to secure smaller masks. Our infection prevention and control team suggests the following to ensure a better fit:

- Tie a knot at the end of each of the two ear loops to make them shorter, so that the mask fits securely on your face and is no longer loose.
- We can also provide ear savers that will also help the mask fit securely on your face and is no longer loose. These will be available at the screening desks where the screening staff can share instructions on how to use them.

Family Caregiver Business Centre

How can I access this?

There is a Family Caregiver Business Centre in room 4W415. Families can access a computer, internet, and printer. It is open from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. There is also an additional workspace in room 3W485 (no computers, phones or printers) and is open from 6-8 p.m. For health and safety reasons, only 2 people can be in the rooms at a time. You must wear a mask if there is another person in the room.

Activities for inpatient families and caregivers

Can we get access to a gym to exercise and stay active?

- The Bloorview School Authority gym is available for use twice a week. Until further notice, the therapeutic recreation team is offering supervised family gym time on Tuesday mornings (9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.) and Thursday afternoons (2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.).
- As the weather improves, we hope that neighbourhood walks will be a consistent option available to family caregivers.

What options exist for adult interaction, social ways to connect with other families safely?

Inpatient Parent Talks are for any caregivers on the inpatient unit who would like to connect with each other and a Family Mentor in a group setting. Family Mentors are parents of former clients and volunteers who draw from their lived experience with childhood disability to provide peer support to current clients and families.

Groups usually take place in person, but we will be adapting to virtual meetings over Zoom. Posters will be distributed on the units so that you know where to join online. To find out when future inpatient caregiver events are happening, or if you have questions, please e-mail Melissa Ngo at mngo@hollandbloorview.ca.

Keeping updated and staying connected to a child or loved one

How else can I connect with my child or loved one if I'm not the designated family caregiver on a particular day?

To help stay connected with your child or loved one, iPads are available on the units. We understand that this will not replace being there in-person, but we will continue to do what we can to enable ways to connect you with your child or loved one at this time. The iPads will be disinfected regularly to

prevent any potential spread of germs. Children and family caregivers are required to thoroughly wash their hands before and after use.

If I am not onsite, how can I get regular updates on my child or loved one's status? What is the frequency of those updates?

To request regular updates on your child or loved one's progress, please connect with your social worker to develop a plan that will meet your family's needs.

As an additional resource, you can sign up for connect2care to access information on your child or loved one's clinical health record. Your care team can share details on how to use and access this online platform.

Is there an online hub where I can access the latest updates on how Holland Bloorview is managing the COVID-19 situation, specific to its inpatient population?

We are frequently posting information and updates related to how we're managing COVID-19 on the "News" section of our website at hollandbloorview.ca . The best place to receive information specifically related to inpatient care is through the inpatient letters. We also have a COVID-19 FAQ prepared specifically for inpatient families that we'd be happy to share with you.