COVID-19 Considerations for Communal Dining

Communal Dining for Well Residents (non-outbreak)

Communal dining is an activity that can be modified to adhere to physical distancing recommendations in line with COVID-19 risk reduction measures. Homes should continue to educate and support residents with hand hygiene before and after meals, using soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer of at least 70%. Homes will also want to continue educating residents on physical distancing and respiratory etiquette. Environmental cleaning practices should continue as appropriate and in between meal sittings. When considering the use of physical barriers it is important to ensure that barriers are easily cleaned and disinfected.

Strategies to Consider:

- Utilizing TV trays during meal service to promote physical distancing
- Staggering meal service to allow for multiple sittings per meal
- Rotating residents in the dining room for meal service by meal (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Altering the dining room set up to promote physical distancing, consider removing and/or spacing out tables and chairs
- In a home/unit with an active outbreak situation, all meals are eaten in residents’ rooms
- Any residents feeling unwell should eat all meals in their room

Further Considerations:

- Ensure physical distancing in all communal settings in the home, not just the dining room
- Move chairs to ensure there is no cluster seating in common areas
- Educate all staff and essential visitors on appropriate use of PPE
Follow the home’s infection prevention and control policies which may require further changes to communal activities in the event of an outbreak

Contact public health for additional instructions in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case among residents

Resources

Provincial Guidance for LTC and Retirement Homes

Provincial Guidance for Group Homes/Co-living Settings

COVID-19 FAQs Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority

Grey Bruce Health Unit Guidance and Resources for LTC

CDC Resource  Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes

LTC Menu Planning Guidelines from Dietitians of Canada  April 2020

Retirement Homes Act  - Provision of meals – see section 40