

Inpatient Staff Support – FAQ (Updated January 19, 2022)

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

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.

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.

What factors do you consider for testing clients and having them be in isolation?

All in-patient clients are tested prior to arrival at Holland Bloorview for a variety of viruses including COVID-19, flu and rhinovirus. We are closely monitoring for the onset of symptoms that will impact our clients' health.

Generally speaking, a client will be placed in isolation if they have symptoms of conditions like COVID-19 or the flu. If we decide to re-test a client (or "re-swab"), the sample is tested for the same viruses we looked for during admission. This includes COVID-19, flu and rhinovirus.

It is important to note that we generally do not re-test for COVID-19 after a positive diagnosis because a person might still be shedding dead virus cells that could be picked up on the test for up to 90 days. Instead, we have a 10-day isolation period from symptom onset followed by 24 hours of being symptom free before being removed from isolation.

Every case is looked at individually. We look at baseline measures, the onset of new symptoms, prior testing results and if the client has previously been in isolation.

Are designated caregivers required to show proof of vaccination to remain at bedside?

For our inpatient clients and families, “designated caregivers” include up to three caregivers who are 16 years or older, and have been identified by the client to be bedside. At Holland Bloorview, we don’t consider designated caregivers as visitors. Although we strongly encourage our family members to get vaccinated against COVID-19, we are not restricting access to designated caregivers who aren’t vaccinated to be at their child’s bedside.

Why are designated family caregivers required to take a COVID-19 rapid test daily if at the hospital?

Effective January 17, 2022, due to the high community spread of COVID-19, we aim to continue providing the safest possible environment for kids, youth and families when they are onsite participating in our rehabilitation programs.

The clients in our rehabilitation program are very vulnerable and we need to take all possible safety precautions within reason to keep them safe.

Similar to other hospitals, Holland Bloorview introduced a daily rapid testing program for the designated family caregivers of our inpatient and day patient clients, to be done before each visit to the hospital. These tests are simple, safe and easy to use; they will allow you to know the outcome within 15 minutes and help us all to catch any case of COVID as quickly as possible.

Designated caregivers are required to complete these tests **once daily** (preferably in the morning) before undergoing daily screening in the **front lobby** where they will be asked if they’ve completed daily testing and tested negative.

Some additional notes/reminders:

- Families are required to **stop at the screening desks each time they enter the building** i.e. whether it’s to be screened or show proof that they have already been screened
- Those staying at our onsite family accommodations (5th floor) must also undergo daily screening in the **front lobby**
- Online screening is no longer available at this 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.

To summarize:

- Each client can 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.
- Additionally, designated caregivers may bring an infant under 30 months on-site.

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

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?

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 overnight. We will be sure to notify you as soon as a change or loosening of this expectation takes place.

COVID-19 cases at Holland Bloorview

How many cases of COVID-19 were reported at the hospital?

As of January 19, there have been:

- Total staff cases *temporary unavailable* (21 active, x recovered – *temporarily unavailable*)
- Total 9 inpatient/discharged client cases (2 active, 7 recovered)

There's a COVID-positive case on this unit and I'm concerned about my safety. Can you tell me who the staff and/or family/client was that tested positive for the virus?

We are encouraged to remember that as a hospital, the privacy and confidentiality of our clients, families and staff is always of utmost importance. We acknowledge your anxiety and are here to support you. Despite our collective and individual best efforts, we may continue to see more COVID-positive cases.

Regarding any current and future COVID-19 cases within the Holland Bloorview community, we would appreciate your partnership in respecting the privacy of the impacted individuals. Your compassion is warmly received and appreciated.

If a member of your care team is absent, we will strive to reschedule your loved one's therapy appointments.

To maintain transparency, we will be including at the bottom of our weekly inpatient letters updated information on new and existing COVID-19 cases.

How will I know if I'm at risk of testing positive for the virus? What is Holland Bloorview doing to keep us safe?

With contact tracing, you would have been contacted by our IPAC team if you needed to take any precautions like taking a COVID test or self-isolating. We ask for your patience as depending on the list of possible individuals who were in close contact with the COVID-positive person, this process undertaken by our IPAC and Occupational Health team will take time.

If staff, clients and families continue to follow safety guidelines and wear appropriate PPE, the inpatient unit is a low-risk environment.

Why has my care team changed? Why isn't x person providing care now?

Staff can be off duty for various reasons – personal health, family emergencies, school closings and personal child care needs. We are encouraged to remember that as a hospital, the privacy and confidentiality of our clients, families and staff is always of utmost importance. We acknowledge your anxiety and concerns and are here to support you and stay true to our commitment to safe, quality care.

If a member of your care team is absent, we will strive to reschedule your loved one's therapy appointments and/or look into other ways to facilitate them i.e. virtual. We appreciate your continued support for your child's care needs – we will work together as one team to ensure your loved one's rehabilitation goals are met.

If you are concerned about the risk of contracting the virus, with contact tracing, you would have been contacted by our IPAC team if you needed to take any precautions like taking a COVID test or self-isolating. We ask for your patience as depending on the list of possible individuals who were in close contact with the COVID-positive person, this process undertaken by our IPAC and Occupational Health team will take time. Thank you for your continued partnership.

Vaccine eligibility for inpatient clients and caregivers

Can my child or any of his/her caregivers get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Those aged 5 and up will be eligible to book a Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine appointment through [Ontario's online vaccination booking portal](#). Please consult your paediatrician or family physician if you have any questions about vaccinations.

Please feel free to also ask your care team about the next possible opportunity to get the vaccine for your loved one onsite at Holland Bloorview, thanks to our partnership with Sunnybrook and Toronto Public Health.

Unfortunately we cannot offer the vaccine to inpatient caregivers onsite, outside of the opportunities we share with you in our inpatient letters. Vaccines for anyone born in 2016 or earlier are available at city-run clinics for first, second and booster doses (based on eligibility). Please visit: <https://bit.ly/3zB4LWm>.

Changes to meal service

Why were there changes made to meal service?

We have learned from public health that outbreaks in nursing homes, communal settings and hospitals have originated in dining rooms and break rooms, as well as during communal activities.

What are the changes?

To promote physical distancing and prevent crowding and the potential spread of COVID-19, the following changes came into effect on Wednesday, February 3rd. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy and make adjustments as needed. Changes include:

- Clients in private rooms will be asked to take meals back to their room.
- For those in semi-private or quad rooms, there will be a weekly schedule where families can rotate and eat their meals in the dining area.
- Meal times will start 15 minutes early and be divided into two (2) 25-minute seating sessions. Your nurse will inform you of your dining schedule.

Onsite COVID-19 testing service

Why is Holland Bloorview offering a COVID-19 testing service?

Holland Bloorview's expertise working with children with physical, developmental and complex medical conditions gives us a unique perspective in being able to create a comfortable and safe COVID-19 testing environment for this population.

Families of children with disabilities have been vocal about unsatisfactory experiences accessing COVID-19 testing for their children. By launching a COVID-19 testing service (launched mid-December 2020) specifically designed to meet the needs of this population, we are fulfilling an important and much needed community resource.

Since this service is in close proximity to the hospital, will this increase the risk of COVID-19 cases at Holland Bloorview?

Safety is always our top priority and every effort to reduce crossover between staff, clients, families and members of the community accessing the COVID-19 testing service was considered when planning the logistics and operations of the service.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have followed all public health guidelines to ensure the safety of our community. We have received additional clinical guidelines related specifically to the safe operations of a COVID-19 testing service, which we will also be following closely.

A reminder that, the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is by wearing mask, physical distancing and washing your hands. We are grateful for all of your efforts to keep our community safe. Please continue to do your part to reduce potential spread of the virus.

Is the testing service only accessible to Holland Bloorview clients and families?

Since December 14, 2020, the testing centre has been open to children with disabilities who meet the criteria for testing who may not be Holland Bloorview clients. An appointment is required to access the service and can be made by calling 416-419-4623 (line is open Monday-Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with exception for Tuesdays where lines are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Closed on Sundays and statutory holidays).

In addition to also serving Holland Bloorview alumni, we've also expanded our service to inpatient caregivers. Please call 647-298-3862 or e-mail covidtesting@hollandbloorview.ca if you wish to book at COVID-19 test. There are limited timeslots available during each clinic day throughout the week.

What is the criteria to be eligible for the testing service?

Children and caregivers must meet the eligibility criteria for testing, via a questionnaire, in order to successfully book an appointment. These include but are not limited to:

- Referral by the child's school related to an exposure in the classroom
- Children with physical, developmental and complex medical conditions who cannot be served by their local testing centre.

What are we doing to prevent the risk of transmission to inpatient staff, families/caregivers and clients?

The COVID-19 testing service will be held during off-peak hours in the entrance of the Bloorview School Authority (BSA) from **Monday to Thursday, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

We are prioritizing the safety of everyone in our community in executing this service, including the staff who will be providing the testing and families who will be accessing it. Specific safety measures:

- testing by appointment only
- scheduling enough time for testing and cleaning between clients
- hosting the testing service after-hours
- physical location away from in-patient clients and families with a separate entrance
- use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) by our staff members

Families will also be able to park close to the BSA entrance in order to enter and exit the building as quickly as possible. Families accessing the testing service will not be permitted to use any facilities on-site, including access to the washroom.

Will we be testing family caregivers and siblings as well?

We will be offering testing to up to two family members (family caregivers and/or siblings) for each child that requires testing. As we have been approved to conduct a limited amount of tests per week, we cannot provide swabs to additional family members at this time.

Will Holland Bloorview staff be providing the testing?

The testing service will be operated by Holland Bloorview staff, as we are uniquely qualified to provide this essential service to kids living with disabilities. The swabs will be sent to SickKids for analysis.

Staff members operating the clinic will be provided with all of the essential personal protective equipment (PPE) to do their job confidently and safely, while also continuing to provide care in their home positions.

Will Holland Bloorview staff providing the testing be allowed to also continue in their roles in outpatient/inpatient units?

Yes, the staff who will be conducting the COVID-19 tests will continue to provide care in the inpatient and outpatient units, depending on their role.

A reminder that staff members operating the clinic will be provided with all of the essential personal protective equipment (PPE) to do their job confidently and safely, while also continuing to provide care in their home positions.

How will the screening stations be sanitized and kept clean?

As part of our agreement to operate the COVID-19 testing service, we have received new additional clinical guidelines specifically to ensure the safe operations of a COVID-19 testing service from Toronto Public Health, which we will also be following closely. This includes disinfecting the area between appointments, as well as end-of-day sanitation.

Weekend Pass (WP), Day Pass

Was this change in criteria for Weekend Pass due to the pandemic?

This change in criteria is part of a new practice change that we are beginning to explore as part of the rehabilitation journey for all inpatient clients. The pandemic has allowed us to re-evaluate and re-shape some of our processes and approaches to care and WP is one of them. The experiences of learning new routines with medication, equipment and other resources when on a WP will support ongoing planning for your loved one's safe discharge.

You may go on a WP when this criteria is met:

- Clients and their families must complete a checklist (i.e. be able to safely complete any care routines like medication administration), and have discussed their readiness to go home with their rehab team.
- The availability of LHIN supports may impact individual WP timelines.
- All clients and their households will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure before going on WP and returning to Holland Bloorview.

Note to inpatient staff: Please refer to the LOA Guidance document provided by Dolly Menna-Dack.

Will my child need to take a COVID-19 test when returning to the hospital from Weekend Pass?

All clients returning home from Weekend Pass will have a COVID-19 test done onsite. Your loved one will:

- follow the normal screening process;
- have their COVID-19 test done on arrival to their unit by their nurse; and
- be isolated to their room until the test results return.

We are equipped to provide rapid COVID-19 testing. This will reduce the time clients and families spend isolating while waiting for their test results. Please note that the last swabs accepted for rapid testing will be 10 p.m. on Sundays. If families return after 10 p.m. on Sunday, their swabs will be sent to SickKids for processing and families will need to remain in isolation for a longer period while results become available within 24 hours.

Therapy will continue at the bedside when possible under this circumstance. We encourage you to reach out to a member of your care team for recreation ideas that can be enjoyed at bedside, including iPad loans offered via our Teen Lounge.

Family caregivers will not undergo testing at this time. Should a client test positive, the client will remain in isolation and further testing of caregivers may be recommended.

Can my loved one be granted a Day Pass?

Both Day Passes and Overnight Passes are available to inpatient families. These passes allow clients and families to attend events off hospital premises such as social gatherings and religious events. Please reach out to a member of your care team if you wish to request any of these passes.

Indoor/Outdoor Visits Policy

What do I need to know about booking a visit?

****Effective December 27th, all indoor family visits are temporarily on pause until further notice due to rising COVID-19 case counts in the community.**

These two-hour visits (increased from 50-min slots) are taking place indoors ONLY in the cafeteria and The Grocery Foundation Resource Centre, due to the colder weather.

Caregivers need to notify their care team of their request for a visit ***at least 48 hours in advance*** (especially if a nurse is required to accompany your child) and ***just before heading to an indoor or 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 link below:

- <https://hollandbloorview.ca/outdoor-visits> (closed for the season)
- <https://hollandbloorview.ca/indoor-visits>

If the weather is bad, the outdoor visit will end the family visits coordinator will determine if the allocated indoor spaces are available. If not, the visit will need to be reschedule for another day.

How often can we book a request for these visits?

There is no longer a limit to how many times a family may book a visit per week. However, if you wish to request back-to-back visits, please make the request 3 days in advance.

Visits can be booked on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 5:30 to 8 p.m., in addition to Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

How many people can take part in a visit?

Families can book up to 5 people (plus the client) and their caregivers are to identify the visitors upon booking. The 5-person maximum does not include any children under 2 years of age. All visitors will be screened at the main entrance and asked to do one of the following:

- show proof of COVID-19 vaccination;
- provide a negative COVID-19 test (taken within 72 hours); OR
- participate in rapid testing onsite.

We recommend families inform their guests to arrive 30 minutes early to accommodate additional screening questions and testing if they do not have proof of vaccination. Those who are unable to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test result **will not be permitted further access into the hospital.**

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

We live far from Holland Bloorview, is there any way we can request a longer visit?

Eligible families can book 4-hour time slots for family visits in our Family Accommodations (5th floor). Visits can be booked on **Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.** Eligible families can e-mail familyvisits@hollandbloorview.ca for the pick-a-time system link. All visits must be booked 48 hours prior to the date of the visit to allow for appropriate staffing.

Availability is based on a first come, first served basis, for families who:

- Live beyond a 70 km radius from the hospital; OR
- Have not been medically cleared to access our Weekend Pass program; OR
- Have been cleared for our Weekend Pass program but still need to learn about care needs for their loved one.

Do we still need to mask or physically distance?

When arriving onsite, continue to wear the mask you had on in the community until you reach the screening desks.

Everyone partaking in the visit must wear the medical mask (provided at screening) at all times (e.g. no eating or drinking) while onsite at Holland Bloorview. All visitors over the age of six (6) must wear masks.

Those not able to wear masks for the duration of the visit should refrain from taking part in the visit. This is to protect your loved one and the children on the units from asymptomatic exposure to COVID-19. Children under 2 should **not** wear a mask, due to the risk of suffocation.

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

No, they are not supervised, rather, volunteers will oversee outdoor visits and will escort family caregivers/visitors to the designated visiting area (indoors – cafeteria; outdoors – pavilion)

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.

Day Program

Who can access the Day Program?

Before the pandemic, the program was available to clients who were medically stable and required 2 or more hospital services more than 2 times a week.

As part of a phased approach in resuming this program, it is currently **only open to inpatient clients transitioning home**. Your care team will make the referral if appropriate.

Will transportation be provided to and from the hospital?

Bussing is not available so families and caregivers will need to arrange for transportation.

What infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures are in place?

- Limited to 5 participants max. at a time to adhere to physical distancing requirements
- Participants will be screened daily (provided an “I have been screened sticker”) and are required to wear a mask
- Participants will be required to stay home when sick or if in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Siblings of participants are not permitted to attend with the designated caregiver (exceptions can be made with advance notice)

Family accommodations

Why are there only three rooms available to families?

As part of our gradual re-opening of our family accommodations, we are only making three of our studio rooms (max. 2 people w/2 single beds) available to three families at this time. We are limiting the amount of rooms available out of an abundance of caution to ensure the safety of our clients and families during this pandemic. Also as part of this phase, no children (including inpatients), are allowed to access this area.

When do you foresee opening up more rooms?

We will continue to monitor the situation with the pandemic and work together with our Infection Prevention and Control team before making the decision to safely open up more rooms. You will hear from your care team and via an inpatient letter when more rooms become available. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

What is the criteria when choosing which families get access to these limited number of rooms?

Priority will be given to families that live a minimum of 70 km from the hospital and rooms will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you have any further questions on the application process, feel free to visit hollandbloorview.ca and type “family accommodations” in the search bar. Or you can email accommodation@hollandbloorview.ca OR at ext. 3340.

Activities for inpatient families and caregivers

What spaces/activities can we enjoy outdoors?

Neighbourhood walk

Visit our website at this link (<https://bit.ly/3gMONlo>) to access the outdoor walking route maps and a fun “I spy” activity. One of the routes is attached to this letter. Other walking routes will be shared in the coming weeks. Please inform your care team if you are leaving hospital property.

Accessible playground

This space can be accessed Mon-Fri between 4-8pm and on weekends/holidays from 10am-6pm. Follow the signs posted in the cafeteria to the rear door to access the playground.

3rd floor terraces

Terraces are located by the Complex Continuing Care (CCC) unit and by the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (BIRT) unit. If you’re interested in accessing the terrace spaces, please:

- speak with your nurse who will grant you access and provide you with a swipe card for entry/exit;
- bring a fully-charged personal cell phone with you containing the phone # and extension of the unit you are on (main line: 416-425-6220);
 - o Complex Continuing Care (CCC) – ext. 6018
 - o Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (BIRT) – ext. 6014
 - o Specialized Orthopedic and Development Rehab (SODR) – ext. 6038
- supervise your loved one at all times; and
- ensure you close the terrace door before returning the swipe card to your nurse.

*For the safety of our clients and families, please do not wedge the door open.

**Please also remember to wear a mask if you’re unable to physically distance from others (2 meters or 6 feet).

What can my loved one and I do to get some exercise?

We have created some suggested indoor/outdoor walking routes that clients and caregivers can do to engage in some fun physical activity. Please visit our website at this link (<https://bit.ly/3gMONlo>) to access the indoor and outdoor walking route maps and a fun “I spy” activity.

What kind of activities exist for my child on the weekend?

Music & Arts activities for clients ages 6-18 take place on Saturday and Sunday starting at 1pm. There is limited capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions. To sign up, please see the BIRT/SODR central nursing pod or speak to your Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. Families can also book equipment (balls, etc.) for outside use.

There are also opportunities for clients and their caregivers to participate in weekend activities that support their loved one's therapy goals in a fun and meaningful way. This opportunity may be especially of interest to families who are not yet ready or qualified for Weekend Passes. Space is limited due to COVID-19 room capacity restrictions, however new activities such as robotics will be offered in the Conference Centre so participants can safely distance from others.

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.