

# Frequently Asked Questions

## About Home and Community Care

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### Welcome to Home and Community Care

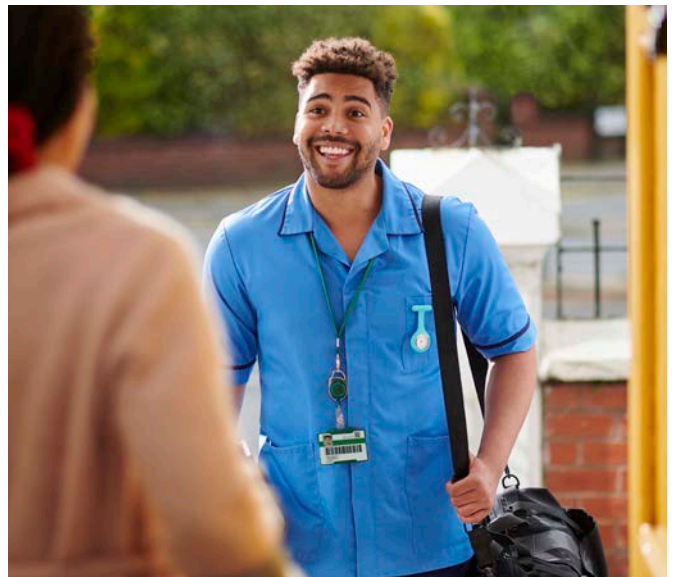
This booklet has been prepared to help answer many of the commonly asked questions about Ontario Health atHome. If you have additional questions or require further information, please contact your nearest office at the phone numbers provided at the back of this booklet, or visit our website at [ontariohealthathome.ca](http://ontariohealthathome.ca)

### What does Ontario Health atHome care do?

We can help you navigate the various aspects of the health care system so that you obtain the right services in the right location in a timely manner. We offer a central point of access to the local health care system. We can provide you with information on all the health and social services available to you, connect you to these services, and coordinate multiple services from a number of different providers. We:

- Provide the public with information and referrals regarding home and community care services, Long-Term Care Homes and other health-related organizations and social services available to them
- Assess people's needs and arrange for health and personal support services in their homes;

- Manage all admissions to Long-Term Care Homes and other settings; and
- Authorize and arrange health services for children at home or at school.



### What services are offered by home and community care?

We coordinate the following services:

- Information and referral services
- Home care services
- Caregiver support and respite services
- Access to adult day programs
- Access to supportive housing for seniors
- Placement in Long-Term Care Homes
- Children's health services
- Chronic Disease Self-Management

## Who can receive home and community care services?

Services are available to eligible Ontario residents of all ages. Eligibility requirements are set for each service by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

To find out if you are eligible for a particular service, please contact your region office at the phone numbers listed at the back of this booklet.

## What if I am not eligible for home and community care services?

We will assist you in exploring other options. This may include providing information and making referrals to other community service organizations where appropriate.

## Do I need a referral to obtain home and community care services?

No. Anyone can contact Ontario Health atHome for information or to make a referral. We also receive referrals from physicians, hospitals, community organizations and other community or health care professionals.

## Do I have to pay for home and community care services?

Home and community care services are funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

## Can I still access home and community care services if I live outside the City of Thunder Bay?

Yes. Ontario Health atHome provides services to all residents of Northwestern Ontario. If you live outside of Northwestern Ontario, we will refer you to the appropriate Ontario Health atHome location in your area.

## How do I obtain services from Ontario Health atHome?

The first step is to contact your nearest Ontario Health atHome office at the phone numbers listed at the back of this booklet. You will be referred to a Home and Community Care Coordinator, who may visit you at home, in the hospital, or at school to discuss the services available to you and/or help you find accommodation in a Long-Term Care Home, if required.

## Who is a Home and Community Care Coordinator and what do they do?

Care Coordinators work for Ontario Health atHome in the community, hospital settings and schools. They provide information, coordinate professional, personal support and homemaking services for people living in their own homes and for children with special health needs, and make arrangements for admission to Long-Term Care Homes. Your Home and Community Care Coordinator is your key contact at Ontario Health atHome. He or she will work with you and your family to:

- Determine your eligibility for services;
- Assess your health care and social needs;
- Develop a plan for meeting your health care needs and monitor, evaluate and adjust this plan as appropriate;
- Authorize, arrange and coordinate the provision of services; and
- Connect you with other services in the community that may be available.

## What services can Ontario Health atHome provide in my home?

Home care services can help you manage your own health care while living at home. Our goal is

to work with you to build on your strengths so you can improve your health and

independence and stay in your home for as long as possible.

The following home care services can be obtained individually or in combination:

- Nursing
- Nutritional counselling
- Occupational therapy
- Personal support and homemaking
- Physiotherapy
- Social work
- Speech-language therapy

Individuals who receive visiting health professional services may also obtain medical supplies and equipment to assist them with managing safely at home. For more information, please see the “Care in Your Home” publication.

### **What is personal support and homemaking? Will someone come and clean my home?**

Personal support includes assistance with a variety of daily living activities, such as hygiene and bathing, dressing and eating. Homemaking services, such as light housekeeping or laundry, are offered in combination with personal support. In order to receive homemaking services, you must also be receiving personal support services from Ontario Health atHome.

### **What is my “service plan”?**

If you require home care services, your Care Coordinator will work with you to develop a plan for meeting your specific health needs.

This “service plan” identifies your health goals which may include:

- things you can do for yourself;
- areas for learning new skills to improve your health and independence;
- people and services in the community that may be of help to you; and
- home care services funded by Ontario Health atHome.

The goal of your service plan is to improve the quality of your life and allow you to live independently in your home for as long as possible.

### **Who is my care team?**

Your care team includes:

- You
- Any family members or caregivers you wish
- Your Care Coordinator
- Your service provider(s)
- Your doctor
- Anyone else who can contribute to your improved health and well-being

### **What can I do to help with my care?**

When you receive services, you agree to participate in your own care. Your progress will be much quicker if you help us to help you.

Please be sure to:

- let your service provider or Care Coordinator know if you are unable to make an appointment, or if you will be away;
- let your Care Coordinator know if your care needs change over time;
- refrain from smoking and contain your pets while your service provider or Care Coordinator is with you; and

- develop a back-up plan in the case of an emergency.

### Who provides home care services?

We purchase services from health care organizations to provide the assistance people need in their homes. These “service providers” include nutritional counsellors, nurses, occupational therapists, personal support workers, homemakers, physiotherapists, social workers, and speech-language therapists.

### How will I know who my service provider is?

Your Care Coordinator will review your service plan with you and arrange for the service provider(s) best suited to meeting your needs. The service provider will contact you and let you know that they have been asked to provide your services. If a service provider comes to your home, he or she will have a name tag that identifies the organization that he or she works for. We recommend that you see this identification before letting anyone into your home.

### Do I need to call the service provider to begin services?

No. The service provider will contact you directly to set up an appointment. Together, you will work out a mutually convenient schedule for appointments/ visits.

### What does the service provider do?

Your service provider is part of your care team. He or she will provide direct health care services to you or teach you and/or your caregiver how to meet your health care needs. Your service provider will inform your Care Coordinator about

your progress and may make recommendations about your health care needs.

### How long do your services last?

Our goal is to help you learn how to manage your own care in order to improve your health and independence. The length or amount of services you receive will be determined by your Care Coordinator based upon your individual strengths, support systems, and care needs. In addition, services funded must be within guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

### Can I purchase additional services?

If you want to receive more services than what is allowed under Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care guidelines, you may purchase additional services from an individual or organization. Our Information and Referral Services can provide contact information to assist you in arranging additional services; however, you are responsible for any services you choose to purchase. We do not endorse or recommend any particular organization, and we encourage you to thoroughly research the quality and suitability of any service. Please note that there may be fees for these additional services.

### When will my service plan be reviewed?

Your Care Coordinator will review your service plan with you and your service provider(s) on a regular basis to see how you are managing.

In addition, as part of our continuous quality improvement program, we conduct random surveys of our patients to obtain feedback on our services.

## Who should I talk to about my services – my service provider or my Ontario Health atHome Care Coordinator?

We encourage you to talk with your Care Coordinator. Please keep your Coordinator's contact information handy. If you have forgotten who your Coordinator is, our receptionist can provide that information to you. You should inform your Care Coordinator if:

- you cannot make an appointment;
- your health condition changes;
- you move or change your phone number; or
- you have any difficulties with your services.

## What do I do if I am not happy with my care?

You or your family member may contact your Care Coordinator at any time to discuss your care and any concerns or issues you may have. Your Coordinator may arrange a meeting of your care team, including you, your family member(s), and your service provider(s). We also have a formal process for addressing any concerns or complaints about its services.

This process ensures that every concern or complaint is reviewed and responded to in a timely manner.

## Who should I call if I have to miss a visit from my service provider?

Please call your service provider directly if you are unable to keep an appointment. It is important to inform your Care Coordinator in advance of any extended absences such as vacation or hospital stays.

## What happens if I become hospitalized for an extended period of time?

Please notify your Care Coordinator of any hospital stays. A Coordinator will contact you prior to your discharge from hospital to determine whether you require services when you go home.

Should you become hospitalized for more than two weeks, your home care services will be discontinued and a new referral is required in order to reassess your health status.

## What happens when my service ends?

There may be a time when you will be able to meet your own care needs. At that time, you will be discharged from Ontario Health atHome, and you may be connected to other community resources. If you require service in the future, you will begin the process again. Upon discharge, you may be asked to complete a confidential and anonymous survey that is intended to measure your level of satisfaction with our services.

We encourage you to complete this survey because your experience is important to us. We use your feedback to continuously improve the quality of all aspects of our services.

## Who can see my health records?

You must provide verbal or written consent to the Ontario Health atHome to allow any of your health information to be shared. Please see the publication, "Protecting Your Privacy" for more details.

## What is respite care?

Respite care provides a period of relief for people who are responsible for the ongoing care of an individual. It can take many different forms according to the needs of each family. For

example, the short-stay respite program gives caregivers a break from their responsibilities while their adult family member is temporarily cared for in a Long-Term Care Home or health care facility.

We also provide access to adult day programs, which offer social, recreational and physical activities to seniors outside their home, while giving the regular caregiver a break. In addition, respite can be provided in a person's own home with the personal support and homemaking services.

For more information on respite services, see the "Caregiver Support and Respite Services" brochure.



### How do I apply for admission to a Long-Term Care Home?

The first step is to contact your local Ontario Health atHome office. We coordinate all applications and admissions to Long-Term Care Homes in the area. We will discuss what options are available to ensure that you or your family member receives the type of care and support

needed. If you require admission to a Long-Term Care Home, the we will:

- carry out your needs assessment and determine your eligibility for long-term care;
- coordinate the application process;
- place you on the waiting lists for the Long-Term Care Homes you select;
- notify you when a place becomes available; and
- facilitate your move into a Long-Term Care Home.

We have created a series of booklets about considering, applying for, selecting and moving into a Long-Term Care Home. These booklets are available by calling your nearest Ontario Health atHome region office.

### How do I get a family member admitted to a Long-Term Care Home?

Contact your local Ontario Health atHome office. A person cannot be admitted to a Long-Term Care Home unless he or she consents to the admission. A health care professional will assess whether a person is capable of making his/her own decisions about his/her health care and admission to a Long-Term Care Home.

If the person is determined to be incapable of giving an informed consent about placement, the consent of his/her "Power of Attorney for Personal Care" is required. If a Power of Attorney for Personal Care has not been appointed, a family member has the right to make the decision and provide consent. Your local Ontario Health atHome office can provide you with more information on this process.

## What are the alternatives to Long-Term Care Homes?

There are various alternatives, including home and community support services and other types of residential care, such as supportive housing or retirement homes. A Care Coordinator can provide you with information and help you access the best option for meeting your specific needs.

## What services are available for children and youth?

We arrange health and support services for children who require assistance at home or at school. This may include nursing, nutritional counselling, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and/or speech-language therapy. Our services are designed to help children with special health needs participate as fully as possible in both home and school life.

The Mental Health and Addiction Nurses (MHAN) program places a nurse with a School Board in order to support children and youth in schools across the Northwest. The nurse provides education, assessments, care plans, and short-term counselling related to any issues involving mental health and substance abuse.

We can also assist you in obtaining respite care, which provides a period of relief for parents or caregivers while ensuring appropriate care for their children.

We determine eligibility for the Ontario government's Enhanced Respite Service, which is a program specifically designed for families with children who have multiple health needs.

For more information, please see the "Children's Health Services" brochures.

## Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this service, please contact: **310-2222** • [ontariohealthathome.ca](http://ontariohealthathome.ca)

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
(Local Time) Monday to Friday

### Thunder Bay

961 Alloy Drive, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5Z8  
Tel: 1-807-345-7339  
Toll-free: 1-800-626-5406

### Kenora

35 Wolsley Street, Suite #3 Kenora, ON P9N 0H8  
Tel: 1-807-467-4757  
Toll-free: 1-877-661-6621

### Dryden

6 – 61 King Street Dryden, ON P8N 1B7  
Tel: 1-807-223-5948  
Toll-free: 1-877-661-6621

### Fort Frances

110 Victoria Avenue, Fort Frances, ON P9A 2B7  
Tel: 1-807-274-8561  
Toll-free: 1-877-661-6621