



**Almonte General Hospital • Fairview Manor**

**December 17, 2020**

### **Is it safe to bring in gifts to our Patients and Residents?**

Please see the statement below from the Leeds Grenville Health Unit regarding the handling of gifts in health care facilities:

“The CDC and Health Canada both agree that COVID-19 spreads from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets and aerosols created when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, shouts, or talks. In general, we know the virus is able to persist on different surfaces for varying amounts of time. So, when bringing or receiving gifts and packages, Health Canada advises people to continue to maintain proper hygiene to lower any risk of surface transmission. That includes washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, using alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, and to avoid touching your face.

**At this time there are no restrictions on mail, packages or flowers entering health care facilities.** The risk of any of these items is very low. In fact the joy gifts, cards and flowers bring outweighs any risk receiving them might bring. It has been proven that flowers help patients recover faster. There is no literature on the survival of viruses on plants however the risk is very low. If flowers did get respiratory droplets on them they won't be redistributed in the air. Just wash your hands after handling them. If you want you can just wipe down the plastic around the flowers using soap and water or a disinfectant wipe. You could also choose to remove the plastic wrapping before delivery to the recipient. If you don't wipe it down that is fine, just wash your hands with soap and water so if there was any virus on the packaging it is washed off your hands. Same thing applies after handling a card, package or any mail. Just wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand sanitizer and you will be fine. **Food for sharing should be avoided so resist the urge to provide plates of Christmas goodies to staff for now.** Despite evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 isn't easily spread through food, experts, suggests you may want to skip it sharing homemade food and baked goods this year. These types of sharing activities can create gatherings of people where physical distancing may not be maintained. Consistently performing proper hand hygiene after handling any items means that no waiting period is required for handling of mail, packages (including wrapped Christmas gifts) or flowers. “

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the health unit at 613-345-5685, extension 222 or click: [Health Unit resources available online](#).

Or

Contact the Infection Prevention and Control Department for AGH-FVM @ EXT 2490

Thank you,

The IPAC Department



*"Every gift is a wish for  
your happiness"*

Richard Bach