

# Military Family Health

## Quick Reference Guide for Military Families When Meeting with a Health Care Provider



Photo courtesy of CFMWS

### Canadian military families

In Canada, there are 40,000 families of full-time Regular Force Canadian Armed Forces personnel. Most health care providers in Canada are unaware that military families do not receive health care through the military and must access services through provincial and territorial health care systems.

In addition, most health care providers are unaware of the life patterns and events that are shared by military families such as frequent relocations, regular family absences due to training and/or deployment, and the increased risk for operational injury, illness, or death of the military family member. The ongoing stress of living with these events can affect the health and well-being of all members of the family.

Military families come in different shapes and sizes and may or may not include children. Some military families may be caregivers to aging parents or family members with disabilities. Sharing your life situation and experiences with your new health care provider will go a long way in helping develop a relationship that will benefit everyone.

### Share information about you and your family

**Tell your health care provider how you and your family are managing relocations and absences.**

- Have you recently moved into this community?
- Do you need assistance with the transfer of your family's health records/ medical records?
- Is the military member frequently away from the family for operational duties? Are they, or have they, been deployed?
- Are you worried about the risk to your family member's safety while they are serving?
- Has your military family member been injured while serving?

**Tell your health care provider if you or anyone in your family has any health concerns.**

- Do you have any concerns about yourself or any of your family members?
- Have postings had any impacts on your family's health care?

- Were you or any family members on any waiting lists for health services in your previous community, or are you/they on any now? Tell your health care provider how they can help address continuity of care challenges.
- If your family is experiencing frequent periods of absence from the serving member, how are you and your family managing with the changing roles and transitions?
- If there has been an operational injury, including mental health impacts, how are the members of your family managing?
- If you are caring for your injured military member, how are you managing?
- Are you getting the support you need?

### Things to share with your health care provider about your health

- Are your vaccinations up to date? Inquire about the province's vaccination schedule.
- Are you due for routine health screening procedures for your age and sex?
- Is there anything about your health care history that is important for your provider to know about?
- Are there planned health care referrals before your relocation?
- What kinds of resources and supports have been helpful in previous communities?
- If you've moved recently, or moved a lot, how have you adapted to the relocation?
- If the military family member is away or has been deployed, how have you dealt with the family member absence?
- If there has been a military injury, how have you been affected by the injury?



### Things to share with your health care provider if you have children

- Are your child's vaccinations up to date? Inquire about the province's vaccination schedule.
- Are your child's well-baby/well-child checks up to date? Inquire about the province's schedule for well-baby/well-child check timelines.
- If you've moved recently, or moved a lot, how has your child adapted to the relocations? Has s/he been able to make friends? Has s/he transitioned academically at the new school? Has s/he transitioned to extra-curricular activities? Is s/he showing any adjustment difficulties?
- If the military parent is away or been deployed, how has your child dealt with these? Children can experience challenges differently before, during and after parental absences. Does s/he react differently before, during or after the absence? If there has been a military injury, how has your child been affected by the injury?
- What kinds of resources and supports have been helpful in previous communities?

### Do you need additional help or support?

- Ask about any community-based programs and services that may meet your needs or those of your child and/or dependent.

### Military Family Services

Military families in Canada have access to a variety of prevention, support, and intervention services including access to their local Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC). Information on these services can be found at [www.cafconnection.ca](http://www.cafconnection.ca) or via the Family Information Line at 1-800-866-4546.

### Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP)

CAF personnel and their families also have access to services through the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP), a bilingual telephone and face to face counselling service that is voluntary and confidential, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-268-7708.



### Military Family Health Portal

An online enhanced health navigation tool for Canadian military families.  
<http://www.calian.com/mfhp>

*Brought to you by the Innovation to Impact working group*