



Visitation Policy

Policy: Visitation for New York State Skilled Nursing Facilities.

Procedure: To safely accommodate visitors to New York State Skilled Nursing Facilities under NYSDOH guidance. Limited visitation will be allowed when the facility has met the criteria listed in the guidance and is in compliance with all reporting and regulations as directed by NYSDOH.

Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention

These core principles are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CMS, and NYSDOH guidance for nursing homes, and should be adhered to at all times.

- Screening of all who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days
- Hand hygiene
- Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose)
- Social distancing at least six feet between persons
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices
- Cleaning and disinfecting high-frequency touched surfaces in the facility often, and designated visitation areas after each visit
- Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Effective cohorting of residents
- Resident and staff testing conducted as required by CMS and/or NYSDOH

Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention should not be permitted to visit or should be asked to leave.

Outdoor Visitation

Outdoor visitation is preferred even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated* against COVID-19. Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Therefore, visits should be held outdoors whenever practicable. However, weather considerations (e.g., inclement weather, excessively hot or cold temperatures, poor air quality) or an individual resident's health status (e.g., medical condition(s), COVID-19 status) may hinder outdoor visits.

Outdoor visitation will be allowed for all residents who are not in isolation or quarantine.

Indoor Visitation

Facilities should allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents (regardless of vaccination status), except for a few circumstances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission (note: compassionate care visits should be permitted at all times).

These scenarios include limiting indoor visitation for:

- Unvaccinated residents, if
 - the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is >10%
 - and <70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated;
- Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions
- Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.
- Indoor visitation will be conducted in resident rooms that require the least amount of movement through resident care areas.
- Indoor visitation can occur in the resident's room if all parties are vaccinated. If not vaccinated they will be outside weather permitting or monitored inside in a designated location.
- If a visitor and resident are fully vaccinated they may have a in room visit (alone) with masks and social distancing. Proof of vaccination must be presented upon arrival.

Indoor Visitation during an Outbreak

When a new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff is identified, a facility should immediately begin outbreak testing and suspend all visitation (except that required under federal disability rights law), until at least one round of facility-wide testing is completed.

Visitation can resume based on the following criteria:

- If the first round of outbreak testing reveals no additional COVID-19 cases in other areas (e.g., units) of the facility, then visitation can resume for residents in areas/units with no COVID-19 cases.
- The facility will suspend visitation on the affected unit until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing.
- If the first round of outbreak testing reveals one or more additional COVID-19 cases in other areas/units of the facility (e.g., new cases in two or more units), then facilities should suspend visitation for all residents (vaccinated and unvaccinated), until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing.

For indoor and outdoor visitation:

The ground will be marked to show how visitors can place themselves with at least 6-foot separation.

A sign will be posted with the maximum number of residents and visitors that can occupy the area.

A sign will be posted to cue 6-foot separation, face covering, and hand hygiene.

Alcohol-based hand rub will be available in the area.

Visitors will call and schedule a time for visitation.

Visiting hours may vary based on staffing and daily operations of the facility.

Visits will generally be limited to 1 hour maximum, and may need to be shorter if circumstances dictate. Requests for longer visits will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The visitors and staff will be aware of the agreed upon time frame prior to the visit.

Visitors will be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID 19 upon arrival.

Screening must check for each of these exclusion criteria:

- measured body temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or more
- symptoms of COVID-19, as listed by CDC
- diagnosis of COVID-19 before completing the appropriate period of isolation;

- those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status).

Screening tool will be retained in the facility for at least 30 days for reference.

Visitor contact information will be gathered as a tracing tool should COVID-19 become prevalent in the facility. This information will be kept and filed for contract tracing reference.

Visitors will be notified upon arrival that if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 within three days after visiting, they must immediately notify the facility. The facility will follow current NYSDOH guidance for any potential visit related exposures.

Visitors will not be required to be tested or vaccinated (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation. Visitors will be offered and encouraged to be rapid tested with their screening.

Visits will be supervised to ensure infection control practices are utilized, including that visitors keep at least a 6-foot separation between themselves and the resident, that the visitor continually wears a cloth face covering or face mask, and that the visitor practices proper hand hygiene.

Educational information will be given to visitors which include, but not limited to, the proper hand washing techniques, proper use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and an easy-to-read fact sheet outlining visitor expectations including appropriate hand hygiene and face coverings.

Upon completion of the visit, facility staff will clean and sanitize the visiting area using EPA approved cleaning products and disposed of properly.

The facility Administrator will be notified of any violation or variance to this policy.

If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.

Compassionate care visits, and visits required under federal disability rights law, should be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident's vaccination status, the county's COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.

Required visitation and access to the Long Term Care Ombudsman will be in accordance to current NYSDOH guidance.

DINING and ACTIVITIES

Communal dining may occur without the use of face coverings or physical distancing if all residents are fully vaccinated. If unvaccinated residents are present then all must wear a face masks when not eating and the unvaccinated should physically distance from the others.

Group activities may occur without the use of face coverings or social distancing if all residents are fully vaccinated. If un vaccinated residents are participating then all residents must wear face coverings and will physically distance from the others.

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***Fully Vaccinated** : The vaccination status of a person who is \geq two weeks following receipt of the second dose in a valid two-dose series, or \geq two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.