



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. Visitation will be allowed based on the criteria listed in the guidance and the facility will comply with all regulations and reporting 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 (this may limit the number of visitors in a location at any given time).
- 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

Updated: 12/28/2021

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, and 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. When conducting outdoor visitation, all appropriate Infection Control and Prevention practices should be adhered to.

Indoor Visitation

Indoor visitation will be allowed at all times and for all residents (regardless of vaccination status). Anyone that is under transmission based precautions will receive education of risks and the principles of infection control. Their visitors will receive the same information.

- Indoor visitation will be conducted in resident rooms that require the least amount of movement through resident care areas.
- All visits either in rooms or common areas will be monitored for compliance with Infection Control practices. Both resident and visitor need to have a masks on, if not tolerated by resident, education and documentation must be done.
- If a resident is fully vaccinated they may have an in room visit (alone) with masks and social distancing. They may have touch and close contact with hand hygiene afterwards.
- Visits will be conducted in a area to provide privacy.
- No large gatherings can occur if social distancing can not be maintained.

- Ideally in room visits should be conducted when the room mate is not present, if this is not a option, then visits can occur with the room mate present IF physical distancing can be maintained.

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 per guidance of NYSDOH.

While not recommended, residents on transmission based precautions or quarantine can still receive visitors

- Visits should occur in the residents room
- The resident should wear a well fitting facemask (if tolerated).
- Before visiting residents who are on TBP or quarantine, visitors will be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and precautions necessary in order to visit the resident.
- Visitors should adhere to the core principles of infection prevention
- The facility will offer well fitting face masks or other appropriate PPE.

Residents who are known to have close contacts or are identified as a part of a broad based outbreak response , indoor visitation will occur only in residents room, the resident and their visitors should wear well fitting source control (if tolerated) and physically distance.

- Source control and physical distancing should always be followed for all residents.
- NOTE: In all cases visitors should be notified about the potential for COVID-19 exposure in the facility and adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention including effective hand hygiene and the use of masks.
- Communal activities / Dining during an outbreak
- Those residents identified as having close contact to the positive person should not participate in communal dining or activities.
- Those unvaccinated will be quarantined for 14 days even if test negative.
- Fully vaccinated residents and those who have had COVID-9 within the last 90 days may leave their rooms with face coverings.

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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 be encouraged to call and schedule a time for visitation so that best practices of IFC and cleaning and disinfecting can be done.

A log of every visitor and location will be maintained for contact tracing during a outbreak investigation and the local health department will be notified appropriately.

Visits start and end times are crucial to know to again adhere to the cleaning and disinfecting of the areas.

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 contact tracing reference.

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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 available 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. A schedule locations and times of visits are available for staff for cleaning purposes.

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.

Entry of health care workers and providers of services are permitted in facility as long as they are not subject to work exclusion due to COVID-19 exposure or shows signs and symptoms of COVID after screening. They must adhere to the core principles of COVID infection prevention and must comply with COVID testing requirements.

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 than all must wear a face masks when not eating and the unvaccinated should physically distance from the others.

The safest approach is for everyone, regardless of vaccination status to wear a face covering or masks while in communal areas of facility and be socially distanced. While adhering to the core principles of COVID infection prevention, communal activities and dining may occur.

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Visitors may share a meal with the resident as long as they are aware of the risks and adhere to the Infection Prevention principles. Eating in a separate area is preferred but if not possible, then both visitor and resident must be physically distanced from the other residents and must wear masks except while eating or drinking.

ADMISSION VISIT/ RESIDENTS WHO LEAVE FACILITY

- * Unvaccinated new admissions will be quarantined for 14 days even if they have a negative test
- * fully vaccinated resident or someone recovering from COVID in the last 90 days the quarantine is not required.
- * When a resident leaves the facility for more than 24 hours they will be treated like a new admission.
- * residents going out to medical appointments or outings will be reminded to use a mask, hand hygiene and social distancing, as well as anyone accompanying them. They will be screened before they enter the facility so if need , proper precautions can be implemented.

***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.