















VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES











Tips and Best Practices for Reopening to Visitors in Assisted Living Facilities

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recommends that long-term care facilities do not reopen until all residents and staff members receive a single baseline COVID-19 test. VDSS has compiled tips and best practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Each individual facility should make its decision based on an assessment of its own specific circumstances. This does not diminish the responsibility of assisted living facilities to safely provide care and services to residents and follow existing COVID-19 health and safety guidance.

General Guidance

-  Allow visitors only to COVID-19 negative and asymptomatic residents or residents meeting the criteria for [discontinuation of transmission-based precautions](#).
-  Post signage at entrances and throughout facility that:
 -  Provides information about current visitation policies or restrictions;
 -  Reminds visitors, including contract service providers, and personnel not to enter the building if they have fever or symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
-  Designate one central point of entry to the facility to facilitate screening.
-  Designate a specific route to and from the visiting area.
-  Screen all visitors, including contracted vendors, upon entry to the facility. Do not permit any individual exhibiting symptoms to enter.
-  Residents should sanitize hands prior to entering and exiting the visiting area.
-  Sanitation stations with an alcohol-based hand rub should be accessible to visitors for use prior to entering the visiting area.
-  All visitors must wear a face covering or face mask at all times. If a visitor does not have a face covering or face mask, the facility should provide one for the visit to proceed.
-  All residents must wear a face covering or face mask at all times unless medically contraindicated.
-  Maintain a log of all visits to include visitor's name, contact information, and start/end time of visit in case contact tracing is required.

Visitors - Family Members

-  Designate an area for visiting closest to the entrance of the facility when possible. Restrict movement of family member within the facility.
-  Consider the visitor area capacity for proper physical distancing.
-  Implement accommodations for physical barriers such as curtains for bedbound residents with roommates and smaller facilities that may not have a separate room for visitors.
-  Implement steps to support physical distancing, such as repositioning furniture, mapping spacing on the floor with tape or other marking products, and providing other visual signals for residents.
-  Limit the number of family members permitted to visit each resident at one time.
-  Children may visit as long as they are not permitted to move freely throughout the facility or designated visiting area and can wear a mask for the duration of the visit. Children under two years old are not required to wear a face covering or mask.
-  Schedule and stagger visits to avoid overlap of visitors arriving and departing the facility at one time.
-  Limit duration of each visit to reduce the potential for exposure.
-  Maintain an appropriate staffing pattern to provide oversight of visitors and to ensure sufficient cleaning and sanitizing after each visit.
-  Weather permitting, encourage outdoor visits while maintaining social distancing.



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Visitors - Family Members continued

- 👤 Visiting in a resident room is permitted for bedbound residents. Properly sanitize all surfaces, touch points, and furniture with an EPA-registered agent after each visit.
- 👤 Smaller facilities using dining areas as visitor areas should remove all items used for meal service from tables prior to residents/visitors entering the dining area.
- 👤 Tables not being used for visits should be clearly marked out of service.
- 👤 Clean and disinfect furnishings and touch points using an EPA-registered agent immediately upon completion of visits and prior to placing food service items back on the table.

Visitors - Personal Services

- 👤 Telehealth services continue to be strongly encouraged when possible.
- 👤 Allow a limited number of healthcare personnel at one time (i.e. therapies, dentistry and podiatry) as determined necessary by the facility.
- 👤 Allow podiatry services only if medically necessary.
- 👤 When healthcare services must be performed outside a resident room (i.e. physical therapy), use a designated private area.
- 👤 Properly sanitize all surfaces, touch points, and furniture with an EPA-registered agent after each visit.
- 👤 Pet therapy is permitted for COVID-19 negative and asymptomatic residents or residents meeting the criteria for [discontinuation of transmission-based precautions](#).
- 👤 Hold pet therapy in a designated area and do not permit the pet and handler to walk freely throughout the facility.

Additional Resources:

- [Nursing Home Reopening Guidance FAQs](#)
- [VDH Nursing Home Reopening Guidance](#)
- [Advancing States: Dealing with Adults in Isolation during COVID-19](#)
- [VDH Cleaning and Disinfection Tips for COVID-19](#)
- [CMS Nursing Home Reopening Recommendations \(5/18/2020\)](#)
- [Considerations for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Assisted Living Facilities](#)

Contact your licensing inspector if additional guidance is needed.