



Visitation policy

Effective May 12, 2023

PLEASE READ POLICY IN ITS ENTIRETY

CMS (Centers for Medicare/Medicaid) issued a revised Memorandum (QSO-20-39-HN) revised on 9/23/2022 regarding Nursing Home Visitation – COVID-19.

Bethesda strongly urges all visitors to be vaccinated. Vaccination materials will be supplied to all visitors presenting to Bethesda.

Definitions:

- **Outbreak Testing:**
 - In effect when there are any new positive cases in staff or residents. Testing is conducted on days 1 (one), 3 (three), and 5 (five) from potential exposure dates from contact tracing.

Guidance:

Visitation can be conducted through different means based on a facility's structure and residents' needs, such as in resident rooms, dedicated visitation spaces, outdoors, and for circumstances beyond compassionate care situations. Regardless of how visits are conducted, there are certain core principles and best practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention

- Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
- Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose) only if visitor preference
- Social distancing
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene)
- Cleaning and disinfecting high-frequently touched surfaces in the facility often.
- Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Effective cohorting of residents (e.g., separate areas dedicated to COVID-19 care)
- Resident and staff testing conducted as required at 42 CFR § 483.80(h) (see QSO-20-38-NH)

These core principles are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for nursing homes and should be **always adhered to**. Additionally, visitation should be person-centered, consider the residents' physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, and support their quality of life. The risk of transmission can be further reduced through the use of physical barriers (e.g., clear Plexiglass dividers, curtains). Also, nursing homes should enable visits to be conducted with an adequate degree of privacy. **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.** By following a person-centered approach and adhering to these core principles, visitation can occur safely based on the below guidance.

Bethesda Home of Aberdeen and Bethesda Towne Square will adhere to QSO-20-39-NH by taking a person-centered approach for the follow visitations:

Outdoor Visitation

- Outdoor visitation is preferred (weather permitting) via designated areas.

Indoor Visitation

- Indoor Patio visits
 - **May be requested if resident room will not accommodate indoor room visit.**
- Indoor Room/End of Life/Compassionate Care visits
 - **Starting March May 12, 2023**
 - **All visitor must still screen at screening Kiosk**
 - **Visitation no longer has set hours**
 - **One visitor may accompany a resident in the Dining Room, Activity rooms, Chapel, or lounges. Large groups of visitors cannot congregate in the above areas even if masked.**
 - Visitors can come multiple times a day and stay as long as **resident** allows.
 - **Number of visitors are not restricted; however social distancing must be maintained. For more than four people please contact Bethesda and reserve one of the areas designed for larger group visitation.**
 - **Meals can be brought in and shared in resident's room. Family meals at this time are still prohibited in common areas but may occur in designed areas if reserved ahead of time (please contact Activities).**
 - **MUST ADHERE to Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention (prior page)**
 - If non-compliance Indoor Visitation will be revoked
- Therapeutic Leave
 - Will continue to follow policy on Therapeutic Leave.

Indoor Visitation during an Outbreak

- When a nursing home onset case of COVID-19 is identified, Bethesda will continue to have indoor visitation.
 - All visitors will be notified upon entry of a potential COVID-19 outbreak and the potential risks of visiting.
 - All visits will be conducted in the resident's room during an outbreak investigation and all visitors will be expected to maintain face coverings, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If an outbreak is deemed by facility, masks will be required for all visitors.

Masks

Masking is recommended for individuals in healthcare settings and visitors who:

- Have suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection or other respiratory infection (e.g., those with runny nose, cough, sneeze); or
- Had [close contact](#) (patients and visitors) or a [higher-risk exposure](#) (healthcare provider) with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection, for 10 days after their exposure