



COVID-19 Case and Exposure Guidance LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES

Within the Delaware Public Health District (DPHD) jurisdiction, it is likely that periodic and seasonal surges in COVID-19, flu, and other viruses will occur. DPHD's goal is to continue working to lessen the chance of COVID-19 spread in long-term care residences and to support a safe environment for residents, visitors, and all staff.

This document's purpose is to share current COVID-19 guidance for those who have family members in a long-term care facility within the DPHD jurisdiction.

General Overview

- If the facility's county [COVID-19 Community Transmission](#) is high, staff, residents, and visitors in a healthcare setting (including long-term care facilities) should wear face coverings or masks.
- If the facility's county [COVID-19 Community Transmission](#) is not high, the safest practice is for residents and visitors to wear face coverings or masks. However, the facility could choose not to require visitors to wear face coverings or masks while in the facility, except during an outbreak. Healthcare personnel can choose not to wear masks when in areas restricted from patient access (e.g., offices, staff meeting rooms).

In general, quarantine is not necessary for those who are new admissions and residents who leave the facility for greater than 24 hours; however, they should wear a mask for the 10 days following admission/return.

In general, residents without symptoms do not require quarantine while being checked for COVID-19 after close contact with a COVID-19 case. They should still wear a mask for 10 days following exposure and be tested (unless they have recovered from COVID-19 infection in the prior 30 days). See testing information below.

Visiting

While outdoor visitation is best, when possible, indoor visitation is now allowed 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 in a particular facility. Please review the following recommendations:

- For visitors with recent infections and exposures, facilities can provide guidance (e.g., posted signs at entrances) about recommended actions for visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Visitors with confirmed COVID-19 infection or similar symptoms should postpone in-person visits until they meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria for healthcare settings to end isolation.
- Visitors should wear a well-fitting facemask if they have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the past 10 days. If they cannot wear a mask, it is safest to postpone in-person visits until 10 days after their exposure.
- Facilities can offer well-fitting facemasks, if available; however, they are not required to provide them for visitors.
- Facilities can ensure visitation does not increase risk to other residents by encouraging physical distancing during peak times of visitation and large gatherings.

Visiting residents who are in isolation or quarantine:

- Limit in-person visitation while residents are infectious. Counsel residents and their visitor(s) about the risks of an in-person visit. Encourage alternatives for resident and visitor interactions like video-call applications on cell phones or tablets, when appropriate.
- Before visiting residents, visitors should be made aware of the potential risk of visitation and precautions necessary to visit the resident.
- Visits should occur in the resident's room, and both the resident and their visitor should wear a well-fitting facemask, if tolerated.

Testing

Routine screening testing is no longer required but may be done in the following situations:

- Anyone experiencing symptoms. Refer to CDC guidance below for detailed information about management of symptomatic staff.
- In counties where Community Transmission is high, newly admitted residents and residents who have left the facility for more than 24 hours; admission testing at lower levels of Community Transmission is the decision of the facility.
- If testing is conducted on admission, test the resident on the date of admission and, if negative, again 48 hours after the first negative test and, if negative, again 48 hours after the second negative test.

- Asymptomatic residents with close contact to someone with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, and staff with higher-risk exposures using a series of three viral tests. Testing is recommended immediately (but not earlier than 24 hours after the exposure) and, if negative, again 48 hours (about 2 days) after the first negative test and, if negative, again 48 hours (about 2 days) after the second negative test.
- If residents are symptomatic, they should be tested even if they had COVID-19 and recovered in the last 30 days. In that situation, use an antigen test.

Further guidance for [Managing Healthcare Personnel](#) with COVID-19 Infection or Exposure to COVID-19 is available.

Hand Hygiene in Facilities

- CDC recommends the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers as the primary method for hand hygiene in most healthcare situations.
- When washing hands, wash at least 20 seconds with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty, before eating, and after using the restroom.
- Make sure visitors are cleaning their hands as well.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers effectively reduce the number of germs that may be on the hands of healthcare workers after interacting with patients. Using hand sanitizers is also a quick and easy way for everyone, including healthcare workers, to clean their hands.

Take Everyday Preventive Actions to Stop the Spread of Germs

- Use “common sense” preventive measures:
 - ✓ avoid people who are sick
 - ✓ stay home when you are sick
 - ✓ cover your coughs and sneezes
 - ✓ wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water
- Layer prevention strategies to help prevent severe illness and reduce the potential for strain on the healthcare system:
 - ✓ stay up to date on recommended vaccines
 - ✓ improve ventilation in home, office, schools and when visiting
 - ✓ wear a mask with the best fit, protection, and comfort for you