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## Information for Long-Term Care Facility Visitors

### Background

Guidance for nursing homes, personal care homes and other long-term care facilities is gradually being updated as more counties enter the green phase of Governor Wolf's phased reopening plan.

To ensure a safe return to activities, visitation and other events for residents, the administration is implementing a three-step process of reopening so staff and residents can eventually safely welcome visitors and resume more normal routines. All facilities across the state are required to meet several prerequisites before proceeding into the official three-step process of reopening and facilities can regress backwards if they cannot maintain the corresponding step requirements. More information on the three-step reopening process can be found [here](#).

### When Can I Visit My Loved One in a Nursing Home, Personal Care Home or Long-Term Care Facility?

You will be able to visit your loved one once the facility they reside in enters the second and/or third step of reopening. The facility must make sure the resident is able to safely see visitors and will prioritize those with diseases causing progressive cognitive decline and residents expressing feelings of loneliness. All visits will be pre-scheduled and may have specific time limits, and the facility will create a plan for achieving that. The facility must create an implementation plan that will be posted on their website or available upon request, if they do not have a website. You can find more information for your loved ones' specific facility's plan [there](#).

### What Should I Expect During My Visit?

During your visit, you will have to:

- Wear a face covering or facemask;
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after the visit;
- Stay in designated facility locations;
- Follow social distancing protocols (e.g. no hugging, handholding, etc.);
- Sign in and provide your contact information; and
- Sign out before leaving.

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## **Can I Bring My Children With Me to Visit?**

Children can visit the facility when accompanied by an adult visitor, as long as the number of visitors does not interfere with the facility's social distancing and infection control policies. Adult visitors must be able to manage children and children older than 2 years old must wear a facemask during the entire visit. Children must also maintain strict social distancing.

## **What Will the Facility Do to Keep Myself and My Loved One Safe?**

Each facility must create a comprehensive implementation plan to ensure the safety of residents and staff. As part of this broader implementation plan, the departments of Health and Human Services require each facility to establish and enforce a visitation plan before allowing visitors to enter the facility. This visitation plan must follow specific requirements and protocols, including the following:

- Establish visitation hours;
- Designate a specific space for visits to occur, like a hallway, dining room or outdoor space that is not typically occupied by residents with COVID-19 or exposed to COVID-19;
- For outdoor visitation areas, make sure there is proper coverage from inclement or excessive weather.
- Where possible, use a specified entrance and route for visitors;
- Make sure there are enough staff or volunteers to schedule and screen visitors, help with transporting and transitioning residents, monitor visitation and wipe down the visitation areas after each visit;
- Ensure the visitation areas can provide a clearly defined six-foot distance between the resident and visitors;
- Establish a resident to visitor ratio that is in line with the facility's capacity to maintain social distancing and infection control protocols;
- Use an EPA-registered disinfectant to wipe down visitation areas between visits;
- Determine residents who can safely accept visitors;
- Prioritize scheduled visitation for residents with diseases that cause progressive cognitive decline and residents expressing feelings of loneliness;
- Provide facemasks to residents, if they are able to comply, to wear during the visit; and
- Ensure the requirements for visitors are met.

## **Resources for More Information**

For more information, visit the Department of Health's website, [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov), or the CDC's website [Opens In A New Window](#)

Help is available, contact the Crisis Text Line by texting **PA to 741-741**

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