

Nursing Home Visitation

It is the policy of Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center to ensure safe visitation to our residents.

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

Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention

- Visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine should not enter the facility until they meet the criteria used for residents to discontinue transmission-based precautions (quarantine). Facilities should screen all who enter for these visitation exclusions.
- Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
- Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose) and physical distancing at least six feet between people, in accordance with CDC guidance
- 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-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 (e.g., separate areas dedicated to COVID-19 care)
- Resident and staff testing conducted as required at 42 CFR § 483.80(h) (see QSO20- 38-NH)

These core principles are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for nursing homes, and should be adhered to at all times. 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). Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will enable visits to be conducted with an adequate degree of privacy. Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of infection prevention will not be permitted to visit or will 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.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, source control measures should be implemented for everyone in the facility, regardless of symptoms. It is also important to maintain a safe distance (at least 6 feet) between both patients and staff, as much as possible.

Screening anyone coming into the facility for COVID-19

- 1- Anyone coming into the facility will be screened at the screener area to identify and minimize the entrance of COVID 19 into the facility.
- 2- Upon arrival the personnel designated to screen persons coming into the facility will ask the questions on the Employee Screening Tool or the Visitor Screening Tool.

- 3- Employee / visitors coming into the facility will be asked the questions and answers will be documented as they are being asked.
- 4- If the visitor coming into the facility is screened and answer yes to any of the visitor screening questions the visitor will not be allowed to come into the facility.
- 5- If an employee is asked the entry questions and any answer is yes the employee will not be allowed to come into the facility.
- 7- The facility will make sure infection control procedures are followed upon entering the facility.

The designated person responsible for ensuring that staff and visitors adhere to the policies and procedures will be the Infection Control Preventionist and Compliance Officer.

Visitors are not required to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.

Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center acknowledges the toll that separation and isolation has taken. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center also acknowledges that there is no substitute for physical contact, such as the warm embrace between a resident and their loved one. Therefore, if the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor.

Outdoor Visitation

1. While taking a person-centered approach and adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, outdoor visitation is preferred when the resident and/or visitor are not up-to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses. Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. For outdoor visits, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center has accessible and safe outdoor spaces for visitation.
2. However, weather considerations (e.g., inclement weather, excessively hot or cold temperatures, poor air quality) or an individual resident's health status (e.g., medical condition(s), COVID-19 status, quarantine status) may hinder outdoor visits. When conducting outdoor visitation, all appropriate infection control and prevention practices will be followed.

Indoor Visitation

1. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents as permitted under the regulations. While previously acceptable during the PHE, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will no longer limit the frequency and length of visits for residents, the number of visitors, or require advance scheduling of visits.
2. Although there is no limit on the number of visitors that a resident can have at one time, visits will be conducted in a manner that adheres to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and does not increase risk to other residents. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will ensure that physical distancing can still be maintained during peak times of visitation (e.g., lunch time, after business hours, etc.). Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will avoid large gatherings (e.g., parties, events) where large numbers of visitors are in the same space at the same time and physical distancing cannot be maintained. During indoor visitation, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will limit visitor movement in the facility. For example, visitors should not walk around different halls of the facility. Rather, they should go directly to the resident's room or designated visitation area.

3. If a resident's roommate is not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, or immunocompromised (regardless of vaccination status), visits will try not be conducted in the resident's room, if possible. For situations where there is a roommate and the health status of the resident prevents leaving the room, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will attempt to enable in-room visitation while adhering to the core principles of infection prevention.
4. A resident, may designate a visitor who is a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as an essential caregiver. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center allows in-person visitation by the essential caregiver for at least 2 hours daily.

Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center allows In-person visitation in all of the following circumstances, unless the resident, client, or patient objects:

1. End-of-life situations.
2. A resident, client, or patient who was living with family before being admitted to the provider's care is struggling with the change in environment and lack of in-person family support.
3. The resident, client, or patient is making one or more major medical decisions.
4. A resident, client, or patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died.
5. A resident, client, or patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink which was previously provided by a family member or caregiver.
6. A resident, client, or patient who used to talk and interact with others is seldom speaking.

Face coverings and physical distancing during visits

- Visitors should wear face coverings or masks and physically distance when around other residents or healthcare personnel, regardless of vaccination status.
- If the nursing home's county COVID-19 community level of transmission is substantial to high, all residents and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, should wear face coverings or masks and physically distance, at all times.
- In areas of low to moderate transmission, the safest practice is for residents and visitors to wear face coverings or masks and physically distance, particularly if either of them is at increased risk for or are not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses.
- Residents, regardless of vaccination status, can choose not to wear face coverings or masks when other residents are not present and have close contact (including touch) with their visitor.
- Residents (or their representative) and their visitors, who are not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, will be advised of the risks of physical contact prior to the visit.

While not recommended, residents who are on transmission-based precautions (TBP) or quarantine can still receive visitors. In these cases, visits should occur in the resident's room and the resident should wear a well-fitting facemask (if tolerated). Before visiting residents, who are on TBP or quarantine, visitors

should 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. Facilities may offer well-fitting facemasks or other appropriate PPE, if available; however, facilities are not required to provide PPE for visitors.

Indoor Visitation during an Outbreak

1. An outbreak exists when a new nursing home onset of COVID-19 occurs (i.e., a new COVID-19 case among residents or staff). To swiftly detect cases, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will adhere to CMS regulations and guidance for COVID-19 testing, including routine staff testing, testing of individuals with symptoms, and outbreak testing.
2. When a new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff is identified, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will immediately begin outbreak testing in accordance with CMS QSO 20-38-NH REVISED and CDC guideline.
3. While it is safer for visitors not to enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, visitors will still be allowed in the facility. Visitors should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation and adhere to the core principles of infection prevention. If residents or their representative would like to have a visit during an outbreak investigation, they should wear face coverings or masks during visits, regardless of vaccination status, and visits should ideally occur in the resident's room.

Visitor Testing and Vaccination

1. Victoria Nursing and rehabilitation Center encourages visitors to be tested on their own prior to coming to the facility (e.g., within 2–3 days). Similarly, visitors are encouraged to become vaccinated when they have the opportunity.
2. While visitor testing and vaccination can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, visitors are not required to be tested or vaccinated (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation. This also applies to representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and protection and advocacy systems, as described below.
3. CMS strongly encourages all visitors to become vaccinated and Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center educates and also encourages visitors to become vaccinated. Visitor testing and vaccination can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and facilities may ask about a visitors' vaccination status, however, visitors are not required to be tested or vaccinated (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation. If the visitor declines to disclose their vaccination status, the visitor should wear a face covering or mask at all times. This also applies to representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and protection and advocacy systems, as described below.

Compassionate Care Visits

1. At Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center compassionate care visits are allowed at all times. Previously during the PHE, there were some scenarios where residents should only have compassionate care visits. However, visitation is now allowed at all times for all residents, in accordance with CMS regulations.

Required Visitation

1. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will not restrict visitation without a reasonable clinical or safety cause, consistent with 42 CFR § 483.10(f) (4) (v). Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center facilitates in-person visitation consistent with the applicable CMS regulations, which can be done by applying the guidance stated above.
2. Residents have the right to make choices about aspects of his or her life in the facility that are significant to the resident. Visitors, residents, or their representative should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and necessary precautions related to COVID-19 in order to visit the resident. However, if a visitor, resident, or their representative is aware of the risks associated with visitation, and the visit occurs in a manner that does not place other residents at risk (e.g., in the resident's room), the resident must be allowed to receive visitors as he/she chooses.

Entry of Healthcare Workers and Other Providers of Services

1. Health care workers who are not employees of the facility but provide direct care to the facility's residents, such as hospice workers, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel, dialysis technicians, laboratory technicians, radiology technicians, social workers, clergy, etc., are permitted to come into Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center as long as they are not subject to a work exclusion due to an exposure to COVID-19 or showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19 after being screened.
2. EMS personnel do not need to be screened, so they can attend to an emergency without delay.
3. Staff, including individuals providing services under arrangement as well as volunteers, should adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and must comply with COVID-19 testing requirements.

Communal Activities and Dining

1. While adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, communal activities and dining may occur. Book clubs, crafts, movies, exercise, and bingo are all activities that can be facilitated with alterations to adhere to the guidelines for preventing transmission. The safest approach is for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a face covering or mask while on in communal areas of the facility.
2. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will permit residents to leave the facility as they choose. Should a resident choose to leave, the facility should remind the resident and any individual accompanying the resident to follow all recommended infection prevention practices including wearing a face covering or mask, physical distancing, and hand hygiene and to encourage those around them to do the same.
3. Upon the resident's return, Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will take the following actions:
 - a. Screen residents upon return for signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

- i. If the resident or family member reports possible close contact to an individual with COVID-19 while outside of the facility, test the resident for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. Place the resident on quarantine if the resident is not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses.
 - ii. If the resident develops signs or symptoms of COVID-19 after the outing, test the resident for COVID-19 and place the resident on Transmission-Based Precautions, regardless of vaccination status.
- b. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center may also opt to test residents, who are not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, without signs or symptoms if they leave the facility frequently or for a prolonged length of time, such as over 24 hours.
- c. Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center might consider quarantining residents, who are not up-to-date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, and leave the facility if, based on an assessment of risk, uncertainty exists about their adherence or the adherence of those around them to recommended infection prevention measures.
- d. Monitor residents for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily.

Compliance with the Policy

Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center requires visitors to adhere to the visitation policy and may suspend in-person visitation of a specific visitor if the visitor violates these policies and procedures.

Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will provide the visitation policies and procedures to the agency when applying for initial licensure, licensure renewal, or change of ownership.

Victoria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will make the visitation policies and procedures available to the agency for review at any time, upon request.
