

April 28, 2021



Dear Families,

We would like to give you an update regarding visitation of your loved one due to changes in the Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines released on April 20, 2021. The guidelines allow visitation in your **vaccinated** loved one’s room if your loved one has a private room and if you (the visitor) are also fully vaccinated. If your loved one has a roommate, the roommate must also be fully vaccinated. If you are not yet fully vaccinated, you may continue to visit your loved one either outdoors or in a designated space indoors. Due to space limitations within our facility, we ask that all visitors who are not fully vaccinated call ahead of time and reserve a time slot below: weather permitting we will be using the outdoor more for fresh air.

	<b>Harmony</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>South</b>
<b>Monday</b>	10:30 – 11 am	3:30-4:15pm	10:30 – 11:15 am 3:30-4:15pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	2:30-3:15 pm	10:30 – 11:15 am	10:30 – 11:15 am 3:30-4:15pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	10:30 – 11 am	3:30-4:15pm	10:30 – 11:15 am 6:30-7:15
<b>Thursday</b>	2:30-3:15 pm	10:30 – 11:15 am	10:30 – 11:15 am 3:30-4:15pm
<b>Friday</b>	10:30 – 11 am	3:30-4:15pm	10:30 – 11:15 am
<b>Saturday</b>	2:00-3:15pm	2:30-2:45pm	1:30-2:15pm

We understand the importance of family and friends interacting with their loved ones and we hope you will continue to cooperate with us to make this transition go smoothly. Our staff is working hard to maximize interaction time for our residents by providing regular limited group activities and communal dining for your loved ones in our care. We continue to develop appropriate procedures to allow us to implement these plans safely and efficiently, following all infection control and COVID-19 protocols. Please see recent visitation frequently asked questions, guidance by the Department of Public Health as noted in the attached letter including the facility’s visitation fact sheet. As always, your loved one’s safety, and that of all our residents remains paramount in our mind.

Despite these challenges, we are thankful for our dedicated staff who care for our residents with compassion. We have continued to maintain infection control measures throughout the facility. On April 21 we learned of a positive test result for one of our employees. As a result, on April 22 and 23 we tested all residents and staff in our facility—all tests came back negative. We will continue re-test our

staff weekly and bi-weekly based on the latest DPH guidelines which were issued on 3/12/21. We are hopeful that these measures, together with your cooperation while visiting, will keep our residents and staff safe.

Notre Dame Health Care is presently working with our contracted Pharmacy to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine that will be made available to both newly admitted residents and any employees. These will be administered to those who wish to receive it at our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center (LTCC) in an effort to increase our participation percentage and overall community immunity.

Scheduled visits are coordinated by the Activities Department. Please call our main phone number: 508-852-3011, to reach out to Melissa Standring, Director of Activities for our South and West Wings at ext. 3120; or Sandy Potasky, Director of Activities for our Memory Care Wing at ext. 3135. As always our Social Workers are available as point of contact to answer any questions you may have, Sue LaFrenier at ext. 3309, Judy McCabe at ext. 3126 and Hope Bagley at ext. 3108.

It would be appreciated if you would share this information with your fellow family members. This letter will also be posted on our COVID information page on our website, [notredamehealthcare.org](http://notredamehealthcare.org) (simply click the red COVID box on the banner of our homepage for all of our latest updates).

Compassionate care visits will be accommodated at anytime 7 days a week by reaching out to the Social Service Department. Normal visitation of your loved ones has no impact on your request for compassionate visit.

Our best wishes to you and your family.

Emmanuel Ikomi, LNHA  
Executive Director / Administrator

# **Nursing Facility and Rest Homes: Vaccination Options for Residents and Staff & Visitation Frequently Asked Questions**

Updated as of April 20, 2021

*To date, many Nursing Facility and Rest Home residents and staff have received both their first and second doses through the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program (FPPP). The program ended in early April after completing three vaccine clinics at all long-term care facilities. DPH has issued guidance providing recommendations to long-term care facilities for obtaining COVID-19 vaccine for residents and staff in the weeks and months ahead.*

*The below FAQs aim to provide guidance for family members with questions about how vaccination impacts visiting their loved ones, their loved one's care, and how the Commonwealth is working to provide vaccination for any residents or staff who are not yet fully vaccinated.*

*We understand there are many general questions surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine's safety, plan for equitable access, post-vaccine administration guidance, and other health and safety questions. Answers to these general questions and more, can be found on the [COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage.*

## **Can I visit my loved one's room if they are vaccinated?**

State guidance allows visitation in your vaccinated loved one's room if your loved one has a private room and if you are also fully vaccinated. If your loved one has a roommate, the roommate must also be fully vaccinated. If you are not yet fully vaccinated, you should continue to visit your loved one either outdoors or in a designated visitation space indoors. Fully vaccinated means being 14 days or more from receiving the second dose in the vaccination series. For more information on visiting your vaccinated loved one, visit the Department of Public Health's long-term care facility visitation guidance found here: [Limitation on Visitors in Long-Term Care Facilities during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#).

## **Do I have to schedule a visit to see my vaccinated loved one, or can I come by any time?**

State guidance no longer requires long-term care facilities to schedule all resident visits. You should continue to discuss visitation with your loved one's facility to learn more about any specific guidelines they have.

## **Do I have to show my vaccination card when I go to visit?**

No, long-term care facilities are not allowed to require that visitors show proof of vaccination during a visit.

## **I do not want to/cannot get the COVID-19 vaccine. Am I able to visit my loved one in their room if they are vaccinated?**

Currently, state guidance only allows for in-room visitation when both the resident and visitor, and resident's roommate, if applicable, are fully vaccinated. However, you can still have indoor visits with your loved one in a designated space or visit your loved one outdoors.

## **Do I have to be vaccinated to have a compassionate care visit with my loved one in their room?**

No. Compassionate care visits may occur in a loved one's room regardless of vaccination status.

## **Can children visit?**

Visits with children must follow the same guidelines as adults-- if the child is not vaccinated, the visit should occur outdoors or in a designated visitation space indoors.

## **Do I have to wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) such as eye covering, gown, etc. when I go visit my loved one in their room?**

You do not need to wear full PPE when you visit your loved one, whether in their room (if you are both fully vaccinated) or in a designated visitation space. However, you must continue to wear a face mask and practice hand hygiene.

**Can I take my fully vaccinated loved one out of the facility?**

Plans to take your loved one out of the facility should be discussed with the facility or residence in order to understand how to reduce the risk of any exposure and make sure their time away from the facility and return is as safe as possible. These steps include limiting interaction to the fewest number of people and households as possible while the resident is on their planned leave.

Residents who are fully vaccinated and their loved ones should continue to wear a face covering or facemask, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and clean their hands often.

Residents who are not fully vaccinated must adhere to quarantine requirements upon return to the facility. Residents who have recovered within the last six months and those that are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine upon return.

**My loved one's facility has more restrictive visitor policies than what I have seen in the state guidance. Is there anyone I can talk to about this?**

If you have questions about the state's guidance or feel as though your loved one's facility is not adhering to the guidance, please contact the state's Nursing Home Family Resource Line at 617-660-5399

**Can I take my fully vaccinated loved one out of the facility if they are required to quarantine due to close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual?**

Residents who are being quarantined due to close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive should delay any planned activities outside of their facility until their quarantine ends so that they reduce the risk of transmission to anyone.

**Is the state requiring all long-term care staff get vaccinated?**

Long-term care staff are not required by the state to get the COVID-19 vaccine. DPH does strongly encourage all eligible persons, including long-term care staff get vaccinated as soon as they can.

**What vaccination options are available for current residents and staff at long-term care facilities that have not yet received the vaccine or are only partially vaccinated (including through the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program that has ended)?**

The facility may contact their long-term care pharmacy partner to provide the necessary COVID-19 vaccine to the long-term care facility. The facility will then administer dose(s) for the resident. Additional information can be found in DPH Guidance: [Vaccination of Long-term Care Residents and Staff following the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program.](#)

**Where can unvaccinated staff get the vaccine?**

Facilities may contact their long-term care pharmacy partner to provide the necessary COVID-19 vaccine to staff as well as residents. Long-term care staff may also make an appointment at one of the mass vaccination sites, retail pharmacy locations or regional vaccination sites. They can schedule an appointment at a site near them at [mass.gov/COVIDVaccine](https://mass.gov/COVIDVaccine) or call 2-1-1 if unable to use the internet to schedule an appointment.

**If a resident receives their first dose at a facility and is discharged before receiving their second dose, may the resident return to the facility to receive a second dose?**

Facilities may allow for a discharged resident to return to the facility to receive a second dose, however it is not required.

However, it is preferable that former residents make an appointment at one of the mass vaccination sites, retail pharmacy locations or regional vaccination sites. There are more than 170 community vaccination locations. You can schedule an appointment at a site near you at [mass.gov/COVIDVaccine](https://mass.gov/COVIDVaccine) or call 2-1-1 if you are unable to use the internet to schedule an appointment.

**Are hospitals responsible for vaccinating individuals prior to discharge to a long-term care facility?**

While encouraged to vaccinate residents upon discharge, hospitals are not required to do so. If an unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individual is admitted to a long-term care facility, the facility should contact their long-term care pharmacy partner to get the vaccine dose(s) needed.

**If a resident received their first dose at a location other than the long-term care facility prior to admission, will the facility provide the second dose?**

Yes, the facility should reach out to the long-term care pharmacy partner to obtain a second dose for the resident. The resident does not need to return to the location where they received their first dose.

**Are residents required to provide information on whether they have been vaccinated upon admission to the facility?**

No, residents are not required to provide vaccination information upon admission; however, if vaccinated, it may prove to be beneficial to the resident as it allows for expanded visitation and group activities.

Residents in need of a second dose should provide documentation of a first dose if they have it available. This will enable long-term care facility staff who are providing direct care to ensure the resident receives the correct type of second dose. T

**Can residents and staff choose which vaccine they receive?**

No. Residents and staff will receive the vaccine offered to them when they attend a vaccination clinic or receive a dose from their facility's long-term care pharmacy partner. All the vaccines are highly effective and safe. The best vaccine is the one that is available to you. People are urged to take whatever shot they can as soon as it's available.

If you have concerns about these visitation guidelines, please contact the Nursing Home Family Resource Line at **(617) 660-5399**.

## VISITATION FACT SHEET

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The facility will adhere to the safety for all concerned and follow accepted facility wide infection control protocols established by the Department of Public Health. Safety remains our primary concern for our residents and staff. At this time the center court yard will not be available for use for visits. The following are requirements that must be adhered to during your visit:

### Required at time of visit:

1. Visits will only be allowed during **designated visiting hours between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.** all days of the week.
2. **Please use designated visitor's bathroom which is located in the front lobby area.**
3. In order to accommodate our current resident population, most residents may have visits on the units in their rooms provided the resident has been vaccinated.
4. Based on vaccine and quarantine status of resident, some visits may need to be scheduled and supervised by a designated staff member who is knowledgeable of the facility's Personal Protective Equipment & Infection Control protocols.
5. At this time, personal items are allowed to be brought to the visit (i.e. food items, flowers, etc.)
6. Please proceed directly to resident you will be visiting. Wandering in corridors is not allowed.

### Upon arrival:

1. Upon arrival visitors will enter through the front door and are required to go through the screening process by a staff member by filling out a questionnaire, having temperature taken, sanitation of hands and application of a surgical mask that will be provided. Visitor will sign visitor log book.
2. Any temperatures above 100.0F or signs and symptoms of COVID will be denied visitation. Signs and symptoms of COVID are fever, sore throat, malaise/fatigue, body/muscle aches, respiratory infection/Pneumonia/New shortness of breath, headache that is ongoing, cough, new loss of taste or smell, and chills/repeated shaking with chills.
3. We offer mask and face shields to visitors as extra protection.
4. The facility may limit the length of any visit; however, residents must be offered the opportunity to visit for no fewer than 45 minutes; also, the number of visits occurring at the facility on a given day based upon space availability and staffing.
5. Weather permitting; please feel free to use the unit courtyard for your visit. The center courtyard is not available at this time.

### During your visit:

1. Resident and visitors must wear a surgical face mask at all times (covering mouth and nose). Cloth masks are not allowed.
2. Prior to entering the unit, please use the hand sanitizer and "foam in" for hand hygiene.
3. Resident and visitors must remain socially distanced by a minimum of 6 feet at all times if unvaccinated.
4. For infection control purposes, **please refrain from going into the nourishment kitchen on the unit.**
5. For any assistance from nursing, **please use the resident call light in the room instead of approaching and convening at the nurse's station.**
6. At this current time, no meals will be served for visitors.



## **VISITATION FACT SHEET**

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At the end of your visit:

- 1. If desired by both resident and visitors, hug with faces in opposite directions. Avoid close face-face contact even when mask are used.**
2. Upon exiting the unit, please use the hand sanitizer and “foam out” for hand hygiene.
3. Visitor will wear surgical face mask until they leave campus.
4. Scheduled visitors will be escorted to the unit and out of the building through the main entrance after signing out using the visitor log book.
5. To help us lessen the footprints throughout the building, when visit is over we ask you to please leave the building through the front entrance and sign out using the visitor log book.
- 6. We ask that you adhere to these requirements so that we can continue to build on our current visitation and infection control plan to maintain the health and safety of all our residents, staff, and visitors. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. We reserve the right to end the visit if the conditions above are not met.**

If you have any concerns about how your visit was conducted you may call Emmanuel Ikomi, ED/Administrator at (508) 852-3011, ext. 3110, the Nursing Home Family Resource Line at (617) 660-5399, or the Nursing Home Ombudsman Program at (508) 852-5539.