



Guidance for Residents and Staff During the Thanksgiving Holiday

During the Thanksgiving holiday, staff should follow the same recommendations as listed below for residents regarding gathering with their families and/or friends outside of work to protect the vulnerable residents they care for.

If a resident leaves the building for Thanksgiving, ask for the following information:

- Identify the resident's name, date/time, and destination.
- Identify all persons by name that the resident believes they will have contact with.
- Check a box confirming that the resident:
 - Understands that by leaving the community they are putting themselves, other residents, and staff at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 which is a highly contagious, severe respiratory virus. COVID-19 can include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.
 - Understands the importance of infection control such as PPE, social distancing and washing hands - for themselves, but also for their fellow residents and staff.
 - Upon return to the community, the resident will immediately put on a mask and practice infection control strategies. Depending on the community's evaluation of the risk of exposure, residents may need to have increased monitoring or stay in room for up to 14 days; however, when leaving room, wear a mask and practice infection control strategies.
- Require Resident's signature.

Upon the resident's return to the building, ask for the following information:

- Identify the resident's name, date/time.
- Identify the resident's temperature and screen upon return.
- Update all persons the resident had contact with during the outing; and
- Check a box confirming that the resident:
 - Understands they will be required to put on a mask immediately and will be required to wear a mask when leaving their apartment.
 - Require Resident's signature.

Additional Guidance from CMS

For residents that choose to leave the community for the Thanksgiving holiday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recommends the following:

- Limit close contact (maintain physical distancing of six feet or more), keep gatherings as small as possible, and use technology to engage with others remotely.
- Wear facemasks always (including in cars, homes, restaurants, etc.).
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
- Keep safe around food and drinks. Avoid communal serving utensils, passing of food, potluck or buffet style food service, and instead opt for individually prepared plates by a single server.
- Perform hand hygiene often (e.g., wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer);
- Avoid large gatherings, crowded areas, and high-risk activities such as singing.
- For those attending a gathering, avoid contact with individuals outside of their household for 14 days prior to the gathering.
- Ask anyone who has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, to not attend the gathering.
- If possible, conduct gatherings outdoors. Indoor gatherings should have good ventilation, open windows and doors if possible.
- Verbally greet others instead of shaking hands or giving hugs. Think ahead about how you will manage to prevent physical interactions with loved ones of different ages such as young children; and
- Check local conditions and state requirements for precautions and restrictions, including positivity rates and quarantine requirements, before crossing state lines.

Upon resident's return to the building, CMS recommends:

- Screen and increase monitoring for signs and symptoms.
- Test a resident for COVID-19 if signs or symptoms are present or if a resident or their family reports possible exposure to COVID-19 while outside the nursing home. Also, opt to test residents without signs or symptoms if they leave the building frequently or for a prolonged length of time, such as over 24 hours. For more information on testing guidelines (see CMS memorandum QSO-20-38-NH).
- Place the resident on transmission-based precautions (TBP) if the resident or family member reports possible exposure to COVID-19 while outside of the nursing home, or if the resident has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 upon return. Please note that residents and loved ones should report to the nursing home staff if they have had any exposure to COVID-19 while outside of the building.
- Consider placing residents on TBP if they were away for more than 24 hours.

If upon return, the resident does not pass screening criteria, they should be quarantined or isolated based on their circumstances consistent with CDC guidance. If the resident passes screening criteria, then they do not have to be quarantined or isolated.

Long-term care facilities are strongly encouraged to utilize testing resources to perform COVID-19 testing for residents returning from absences. Many facilities have received Point of Care tests that may be used for this purpose; however, this should not be the only tool to monitor residents. Symptomatic individuals who test negative with a Point of Care test should still be quarantined, and retesting using a PCR test should be considered. If the facility conducts testing, it must be based on current CDC and FDA guidance and results reported to the Department of Health as required.