



## Staying Safe in the Community

Daily routines are important for dementia patients. They help them to know what to expect and should incorporate activities to promote independence. During this time of uncertainty, it is important to maintain this the best you can, to help your loved one to feel secure. In order for you to be able to get back to your own routine and responsibilities out in the community, you will need to make some adjustments to do this safely.

### Before you go out

**Be informed and be prepared** before you head out to take care of errands, socialize, attend your own appointments and perhaps resume some extra caregiving support.

Each state/city has their own website, with published rules and restrictions that may be updated weekly. Connecticut has been proactive in setting travel restrictions and self-quarantine rules, mandatory wearing of face masks in public settings and wherever you are not able to practice social distancing of 6 feet, as well as guidelines for various businesses and settings throughout the community, Visit <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Latest-Guidance> to learn more.

**Understand the risks, as you plan your outings.** Research has consistently indicated, the very best way to protect yourself from the virus overall, is to to avoid exposure. The more you interact with others, and the closer you are to them, the higher the risk factor.

- If you go out, wear a cloth face mask covering over your nose and mouth.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) from others, especially if you have a higher risk of serious illness.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick or has symptoms. Also, avoid large events and mass gatherings.
- Practice good hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- If you feel sick, stay home. Don't visit public areas unless you're going to get medical care. Avoid taking public transportation if you're sick.
- If you're at higher risk of serious illness, it is still safer to stay home. If other members of your household return to work or visit places where social distancing isn't possible, it's recommended that they isolate themselves from you.
- Know about your community and if there has been a recent spike in positive cases. The CDC tracks and publishes this information. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html#reporting-cases>.

### **Grocery Shopping**

Grocery shopping online has made it easier to be able to order what you need to have it delivered directly to you, or to be available for curbside pick-up, to avoid contact. If you prefer to do the shopping yourself, check local markets to see if they are offering early shopping hours for seniors to avoid the crowds. Follow same guidelines as you do with all other errands and trips out of your house; wear a face mask covering, social distance and wash your hands thoroughly when you return home, as well as when you finish unpacking your groceries. Gloves are optional and be sure to have your cart sanitized before you begin your shopping. Learn which grocery stores near you are best following protocols; including: limiting the number of customers, sanitizing high touch areas, have installed barriers between cashiers, and offer contactless pay options.

### **Gas Stations**

Wear your face mask when you exit the car to pump gas and wipe down anything you plan to touch. Pay by credit card at the pump. Use your hand sanitizer stored in your car before you begin to drive and wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you return home.

### **Pharmacy**

Some pharmacies are offering free delivery, where you can confirm your order through their automated telephone system and pay virtually. Drive-up windows are also nice options for no contact if you prefer not to go inside the store. Most pharmacies in our community have set up safe checkout procedures in store, distancing customers from the pharmacist and providing hand sanitizer and wipes.

### **Going out to Eat**

Check the restaurant's safety practices, to ensure their staff is wearing face cloth coverings and they are requiring the same for their customers, they are regularly disinfecting high touch

surfaces and tables are set up for social distancing. There should also be good ventilation, or choose to go when the weather is nice and you are able to dine outside.

If you are ordering take- out, pay online or over the phone and arrange for curbside pick- up.

## Travel

If you plan to travel, check the CDC and World Health Organization's website for travel advisories to your destination, to understand the risks and quarantine requirements.

- Before traveling, check the websites of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and self-quarantine requirements. Consider checking the U.S. Transportation Security Administration's website and your airline's website for additional guidance (if traveling by air).
- Consider the risks associated with different types of transportation. There might be a risk of getting the COVID-19 virus on a crowded flight or sitting on a bus or train, within 6 feet of others for a prolonged period. Traveling by car could put you in close contact with infected people if you are traveling together or plan to stop for gas, food and public restrooms.
- If you're planning to stay in a hotel, check the hotel's website to learn about precautions being taken and if amenities will be open, as well as their cancellation policy. Once you arrive, clean all high-touch surfaces, such as light switches, faucet handles, door knobs and the remote control.

Most of all, factor in your own health and that of the people you live with, to determine which errands and travel plans are most important and what risk level you are willing to take. Take advantage of online shopping, contact free payment options and telemedicine, as often as you can, to reduce the stress and the exposure.