

# 5 Questions to Ask About Visiting Nursing Homes

Nursing homes are starting to resume in-person visits for families in many states as COVID-19 restrictions ease. These visits will be different than before the pandemic, at least for some time. There may be limits on when, where and for how long you can see loved ones, and distancing rules will likely be in place.

AARP has developed some key questions to ask nursing homes, assisted living, and other long-term care facilities — and yourself — about when and how visitation might resume.

**1. What is the nursing home doing to help make it safe for visitors to come back?**

- Has the facility met the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recommendations for allowing visitors? For example:
  - Has it gone at least 28 days without a new COVID-19 case?
  - Are cases declining in the surrounding community?
  - Have all residents and staff been tested for COVID-19?
  - Does it have enough staff?
  - Are there adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning and disinfecting products?
- Are there plans to permit outdoor visits as a transitional step, like some states have allowed?

**2. What kinds of health checks will be required for visitors?**

- Is the facility following federal guidelines for visitor screening, including:
  - Checking visitors' temperatures?
  - Asking about COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposure?
  - Observing visitors for any symptoms or signs of infection?

**3. Are visits restricted by time and place?**

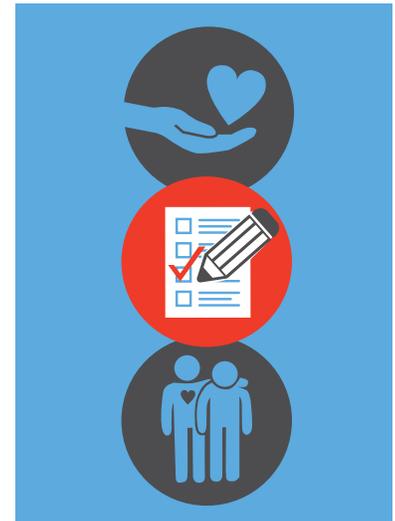
- Do I need to make an appointment with the nursing home to visit a loved one?
- Will visiting hours be restricted, or individual visits time-limited?
- Can I request a schedule for when I can visit my loved one on a regular basis?
- Can I go to my loved one's room, or are visits limited to designated areas inside (or outside) the facility?
- Can more than one person visit a resident at a time?
- Who can I contact if I am denied a visit with my loved one?

**4. What protective and social-distancing measures are in place, in accordance with federal guidelines?**

- Do I have to wear a mask? Will the nursing home provide one for me?
- Is hand sanitizer available on-site, or do I need to bring my own?
- Do I have to stay 6 feet from my loved one?
- Can I bring food or gifts for my loved one?

**5. Are you doing everything possible to minimize risks to residents?**

- Don't visit if you feel ill, even if the symptoms are mild.
- Don't visit if you've had close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the previous two weeks.
- Keep visits short — and stay outdoors, if possible.
- Consider a virtual visit instead.



## RESOURCES

**AARP Nursing Homes Information:**  
[aarp.org/nursinghomes](http://aarp.org/nursinghomes)

**AARP Coronavirus Information:**  
[aarp.org/coronavirus](http://aarp.org/coronavirus)

**AARP Caregiving COVID-19 Tip Sheets:**  
[aarp.org/employercaregiving](http://aarp.org/employercaregiving)

**AARP Caregiving Resource Center & Family Caregiver Support Line (English):**  
[aarp.org/caregiving](http://aarp.org/caregiving)  
or call 877-333-5885

**Eldercare Locator can help you locate services in your area:**  
[eldercare.acl.gov](http://eldercare.acl.gov)

**Your Long-Term Care Ombudsman can help advocate for you:**  
[theconsumervoice.org/get\\_help](http://theconsumervoice.org/get_help)