

# Visitation Guidelines for Residential Congregate Facilities

*These are recommendations and guidance but the circumstances and conditions may vary at each facility. Any facility that moves towards reopening visitation should work on safe plans of reopening that work best for the population they serve and the conditions they are operating in.*

Relaxing current restrictions on indoor visitation might increase the risk for transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in residential congregate facilities. However, vaccination of residents and staff can mitigate some of these risks, and expanding visitation has substantial benefits to residents.

Visitation should be allowed under the conditions below.

## **If the resident being visited is fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup>:**

- Visitors must be fever-free, symptom-free, and have no known exposure to COVID-19 within the past 14 days
- Fully vaccinated visitors may visit in a private room without masks or social distancing
- Visitors who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks and always keep  $\geq 6$  feet apart
- Residents who are fully vaccinated may participate in activities outside of the facility.
  - If the activity takes place in a controlled environment (i.e. private residence, therapy office, day center) where everyone in the location is fully vaccinated, residents may participate without masks or social distancing.
  - If the activity takes place in a public space or if it is uncertain whether everyone in the location has been fully vaccinated, the resident should wear a mask and observe social distancing

## **If the resident being visited is not fully vaccinated:**

- Limit visitation to compassionate care situations if
  - Fewer than 70% of all residents in the facility are vaccinated and the Behavioral Health Region COVID-19 Alert Level is medium or high, OR
  - A facility resident or staff has had a positive COVID-19 test in the past 14 days
- Visitors for unvaccinated residents must *always* show proof of one of the following:
  - being fully vaccinated, or
  - having a negative COVID-19 PCR or NAAT<sup>2</sup> test collected  $\leq 72$  hours of the visit, or
  - having a negative COVID-19 antigen test collected  $\leq 48$  hours of the visit, or
  - having a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days
- Visitors must be fever-free, symptom-free, and have no known exposure to COVID-19 within the past 14 days
- Visitors must wear masks and always maintain social distancing ( $\geq 6$  feet) regardless of their vaccination status
- Residents who are not vaccinated should not participate in activities outside of the facility unless the Behavioral Health Region COVID-19 Alert Level is Low.
  - If the Behavioral Health Region COVID-19 Alert Level is Low, residents may participate in activities outside of the facility wearing a mask and social distancing.

For additional guidance, please refer to the State of Alaska's [COVID-19 Recommended Guidance for Congregate Residential Settings](#).

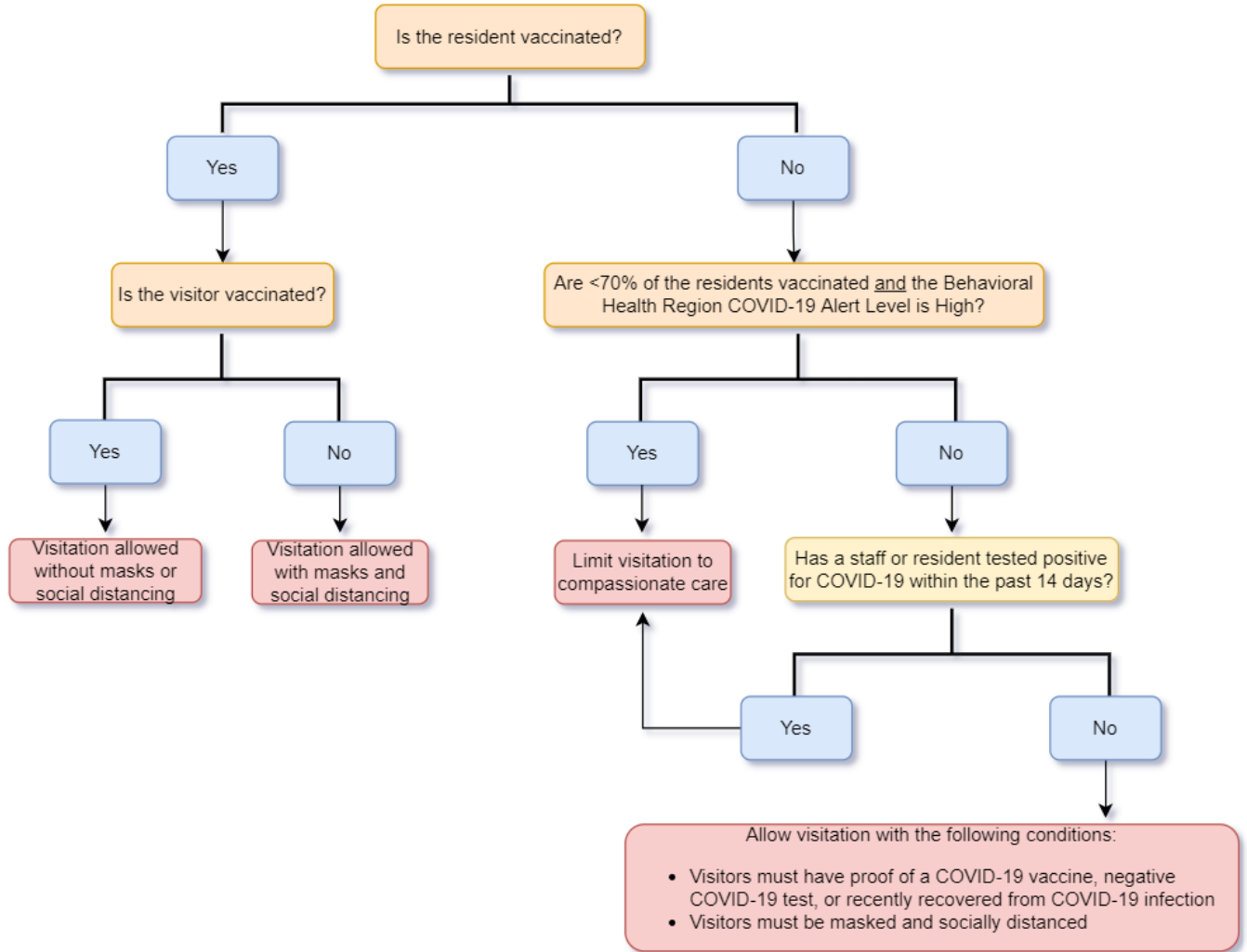
---

<sup>1</sup> "Fully vaccinated" in this context means that the resident is  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine

<sup>2</sup> Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT), also known as a molecular test, is an acceptable alternative to a PCR test. Common NAAT tests include the Cepheid GeneXpert Xpress and Abbott ID NOW among others.

## Visitation Details

- Require visitors and service providers to schedule an appointment for the visit to ensure the facility can safely accommodate the number of people and have enough staff to monitor compliance with required prevention activities.
- Require visitors and service providers **to wear masks in all public areas.**
  - Residents should wear masks unless it is medically contraindicated.
- **Screen** all visitors and service providers.
  - Visitors **must be fever-free, symptom-free, and have no known exposure to COVID-19 within the past 14 days.**
  - Masks must still be worn in public areas
  - Visitors who are fully vaccinated can visit residents who are fully vaccinated in a private room without masks or social distancing.
  - Visitors for residents who are not vaccinated must wear a mask and observe social distancing at all times regardless of their vaccination status.
- Collect visitors' full names and contact information.
- Greet visitors at a designated area at the entrance of the facility where a staff member must:
  - Perform temperature check and [symptom screening](#).
  - Document the visitor's contact information and the results of the screening.
  - Ensure the visitor has a face mask or cloth covering that does not have an [exhalation valve](#), and ensure the mask covers the visitor's nose and mouth.
  - Have the visitor clean their hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash with soap and water for at least twenty seconds.
  - Escort the visitor to the designated visitation area.
- Encourage outdoor visitation (weather permitting). These visits should still adhere to social distancing protocols and universal masking of residents and visitors. If both visitor and resident are fully vaccinated, social distancing precautions can be relaxed.
- Limit indoor visitation to common spaces, such as activity areas or dining rooms that allow for appropriate social distancing and cleaning and disinfection between visitors.
  - Internal group gatherings, such as dining and group activities, should be restricted in these areas during visitation to prevent potential exposure to other residents.
  - For smaller facilities, such as those in residential home-like structures and/or those with limited room ventilation systems, indoor visitation must be limited to a maximum of two visitors for one resident at a time with no congregating of individuals or groups of residents or visitors in the area being used for indoor visitation.
- Do not allow more visitors into the facility than can be safely accommodated with the space available
- Deny entry to visitors or service providers who don't pass screening or who refuse to comply with any of the requirements.



## References

CDC Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination (updated 3/10/21). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html>

CMS Nursing Home Visitation – COVID-19. Updated 3/10/21.  
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment Indoor Visitation Guidance for Residential Care Facilities (updated 11/19/20)  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SIIDVr8Exwyws1jdhAl97IMPBXfadpUNDyucvLPcTY/edit?usp=sharing>