



**EXPANDED VISITATION
FOR
SKILLED NURSING and ASSISTED LIVING**

- **Pearl Nordan Care Center**
- **Fowler Christian Apartments Assisted Living**

What You Need to Know

If you have any questions, please contact us

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www.fowlercommunities.org/covid19

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SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING

Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living communities have been severely impacted by COVID-19, with outbreaks causing high rates of infection, morbidity, and mortality. The vulnerable nature of this population has required aggressive efforts to limit COVID-19 exposure and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at Fowler.

While Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Texas Health and Human Services Commission (THHSC) guidance has focused on protecting nursing home residents from COVID-19, we recognize that physical separation from family and other loved ones has taken a physical and emotional toll on residents and their loved ones. Residents may feel socially isolated, leading to increased risk for depression, anxiety, and other expressions of distress. Residents living with cognitive impairment or other disabilities may find visitor restrictions and other ongoing changes related to COVID-19 confusing or upsetting. CMS understands that nursing home residents derive value from the physical, emotional, and spiritual support they receive through visitation with family and friends. In light of this, CMS and THHSC are revising the guidance regarding visitation in nursing homes during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

Since September 17, 2020, vaccines have received Emergency Use Authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Millions of vaccinations have since been administered to nursing home residents and staff, and these vaccines have been shown to help prevent symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection (i.e., COVID-19). **Therefore, CMS and THHSC in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), updated their visitation guidance accordingly, but emphasized the importance of maintaining infection prevention practices, given the continued risk of COVID-19 transmission.**

While continuing to follow all protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 including the wearing of face masks, Texas nursing and assisted living communities can now permit:

- Close/personal contact during any visitation for fully vaccinated residents.

- Outdoor visitation at all facilities, even when the community has an outbreak.
- Up to two essential caregivers at the same time to visit a resident with any COVID-19 status.
- End-of-life visits without time limits for all residents regardless of their COVID-19 status in all senior care communities, with an expanded definition of end-of-life visits that now includes all residents receiving hospice services; residents at or near the end of life, with or without hospice services; and residents whose prognosis does not indicate recovery.

Senior care communities no longer need to:

- Request general visitation approval from HHSC.
- Monitor visits or escort visitors to and from the visitation area.
- Limit indoor visitation to areas with a plexiglass barrier or booth.
- Require documentation of a negative COVID-19 test result for essential caregivers, salon services visitors or personal visitors.

COMMUNICATION

As Fowler continues to respond to the evolving challenges of the pandemic, we remain in communication with residents, residents’ representatives, families, and neighboring communities. Our goal is to protect our residents and team along with reuniting loved ones in support of providing social and emotional support in the safest environment possible.

The following communication outlets will be utilized to communicate all procedural changes:

- Website www.fowlercommunities.org
- Emails
- Voice Friend
- Phone calls

The Visitation Policy may change at any time due to variable circumstances. Fowler will make every effort to notify visitors in the event of any change.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR BASICS

- Everyone who enters the community must be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and we must deny entry to those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of vaccination status) or has tested positive in the last 10 days.
- Hand hygiene must be done before and after visit (alcohol-based hand rub is preferred).
- Face mask must be worn covering both mouth and nose at all times and must be approved of by the community.
- Social distancing of at least six feet between general visitors (not essential caregivers) and unvaccinated residents.

Visitors who are unable or unwilling to adhere to the Love Your Neighbor Basics will not be permitted to visit or will be asked to leave. By following a person-centered approach and adhering to these basic principles, visitation can occur safely.

COUGH AND SNEEZE ETIQUETTE

Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands are especially important for infection control measures in healthcare settings, such as emergency departments, doctor's offices and clinics.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.

Remember to immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent yourself and your loved ones from getting sick, especially at key times when you are likely to get and spread germs.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

OUTDOOR VISITATION

Outdoor visitation is preferred even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated* against COVID-19. Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Therefore, visits should be held outdoors whenever practicable. However, weather conditions and health status of residents may hinder outdoor visits.

If the resident is fully vaccinated*, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.

Love Your Neighbor Basics must be used.

INDOOR VISITATION

The community will allow indoor visitation for all residents (regardless of vaccination status), except for a few circumstances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission.

- Unvaccinated residents, if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is >10% and <70% of residents in the community are fully vaccinated
- Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions
- Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine

* FULLY VACCINATED REFERS TO A PERSON WHO IS > 2 WEEKS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THE SECOND DOSE IN A 2-DOSE SERIES, OR > 2 WEEKS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF ONE DONE OF A SINGLE-DOSE VACCINE, PER THE CDC'S PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VACCINATED PERSONS.

As a licensed community, we must consider the number of visitors per resident at one time and the total number of visitors in the community at one time and how that may affect the ability to maintain our Love Your Neighbor Basics. ***At this time, visits must be scheduled.***

INDOOR VISITATION (CONT.)

Visitors must limit their movement around the community. Please go directly to your resident's room or the designated visitation area; when leaving go directly out of the building. Please do not stop and talk to other residents, no matter how tempting that can be. Please maintain six feet of distance between all other residents and all staff.

Social distancing continues to be the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly if either party has not been fully vaccinated. However, we acknowledge the toll that separation and isolation has taken. We also acknowledge that there is no substitute for physical contact, such as the warm embrace between a resident and their loved one. Therefore, if the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.

Love Your Neighbor Basics must be used.

INDOOR VISITATION DURING AN OUTBREAK

An outbreak is defined as when there is a new onset of one or more COVID-19 cases among residents or staff.

The community must immediately limit visitation to one visitor at a time and institute outbreak testing. If the new outbreak is isolated to one area, visitation may continue in other areas. The affected area will continue outbreak testing until there has been 14 days without a new case. If COVID-19 is found in more than one area, then the whole community will have limited visitation until the community has met the criteria to stop outbreak testing.

Love Your Neighbor Basics must be used.

VISITOR TESTING AND VACCINATION

While not required, we encourage visitors to continue to test for COVID-19. We also encourage visitors to become vaccinated when they have the opportunity. While visitor testing can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is no longer a requirement for visitation, nor is proof of vaccination.

If you are exhibiting any of the signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling even slightly ill, please reschedule your visit. This is imperative for the safety of your loved ones and our staff.

COMPASSIONATE CARE VISITS

Compassionate care visits are not just for “end of life” situations. Other examples include:

- A newly admitted resident that is having trouble adapting.
- A resident that is grieving after a friend or family member passes away.
- A resident who needs cueing and encouragement with eating or drinking and is experiencing weight loss.
- A resident, who used to talk and interact with others, is experiencing emotional distress, seldom speaking or crying more frequently (when the resident had rarely cried in the past).

Compassionate care visits can be conducted, in addition to family members, by any individual that can meet the resident’s needs, such as clergy or lay persons. These visits should be socially distanced visits. If the resident is fully vaccinated*, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.

These types of visits are allowed at any time, regardless of the resident’s vaccination status, the county’s COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.

Love Your Neighbor Basics must be used.

*FULLY VACCINATED REFERS TO A PERSON WHO IS > 2 WEEKS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THE SECOND DOSE IN A 2-DOSE SERIES, OR > 2 WEEKS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF ONE DOSE OF A SINGLE-DOSE VACCINE, PER THE CDC'S PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VACCINATED PERSONS.

RESIDENTS ON TRANSMISSION-BASED PRECAUTIONS

Residents who are on transmission-based precautions for COVID-19 should only receive visits that are virtual, through windows, or in-person for compassionate care situations, with adherence to transmission-based precautions.

ESSENTIAL CAREGIVERS

- There may be up to two permanently designated essential caregiver visitors per resident.
- Up to two essential caregivers can visit at the same time.
- Do not have to maintain social distancing.
- Essential caregiver and resident must wear mask over mouth and nose at all times and must be approved of by the community. A resident, if eating or drinking, may remove their mask. A visitor may not remove their mask at any time.
- May visit regardless of resident COVID status (negative, positive, or unknown)

REFERENCES

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

(March 10, 2021). Nursing Home Visitation –COVID-19: QSO-20-39-NH

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

(March 22, 2021). COVID-19 Response-Expansion of Reopening Visitation: PL 21-08

VISITATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Must be completed each visit

Name of Visitor: _____

Name of Resident: _____

_____ I acknowledge that I have received the SNF and AL Visitation document.

_____ I acknowledge and agree to follow the Love Your Neighbor Basics.

_____ I understand that if I do not follow Love Your Neighbor Basics, I will be asked to leave.

_____ I acknowledge and agree to follow the regulations regarding visitation.

_____ I acknowledge that visitation rules will change during an outbreak.

_____ I acknowledge that if I am visiting a resident under quarantine, I must wear the PPE required for that area.

Check if you have any of the following symptoms.

Did you wash/sanitize hands upon entry? _____

Fever or Chills _____

Sore Throat _____

Cough _____

Muscle or Body aches, fatigue, headache _____

Nasal Congestion/Running Nose _____

GI Symptoms: Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Abdominal Pain _____

Loss of taste or smell _____

New Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing _____

Current Temperature _____

Have you traveled within the last 14 days? If so, where? If so on airplane or internationally, please complete the full daily screening tool. _____

Have you been in contact with someone who has COVID-19? If so, you will not be permitted into the facility.

Signature of Visitor: _____ Date: _____