

Long-term Care Visitation Guidance Flowchart for Outbreak Status

3/17/2021

MDH has adopted the March 10, 2021, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) guidance for visitation that immediately applies to nursing homes and assisted living-type settings, published in [QSO-20-39-NH Revised \(www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf\)](https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf).

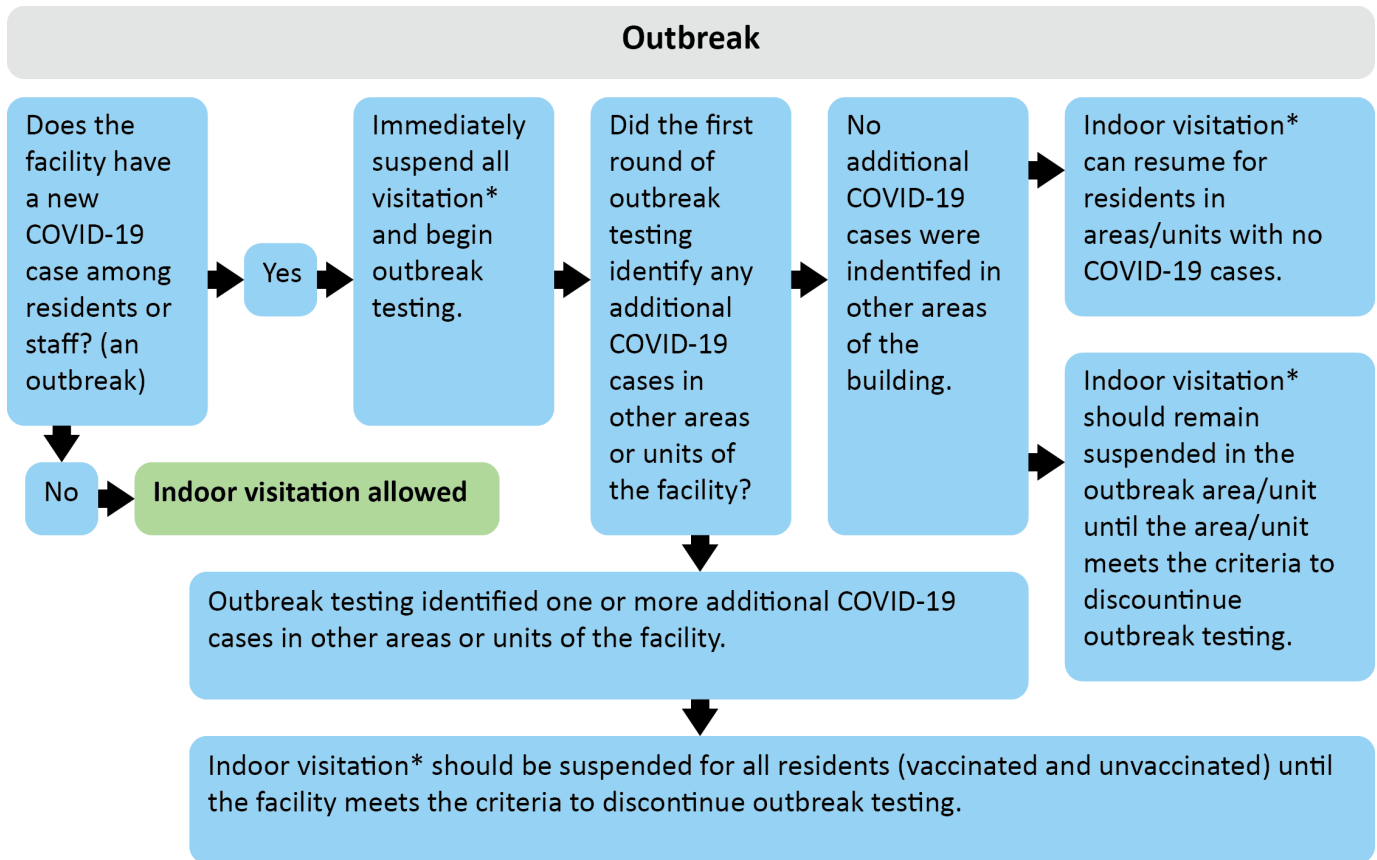
Long-term care facilities should allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents, regardless of whether residents are vaccinated for COVID-19, except for a few instances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of spreading COVID-19. When, and when not to limit visitation based on facility outbreak status is shown in the flowchart below.

An outbreak in a long-term care facility is when a new case of COVID-19 occurs among residents or staff. This guidance is intended to describe how visitation can still take place when there is an outbreak, if there is evidence that the spread of COVID-19 is contained to a single area or unit of the facility.

Facilities should consider how the ability to maintain the core principles of infection prevention is affected by the number of visitors received at a time per resident and the total number of visitors in the facility at one time (based on the building size and physical space). If necessary, facilities should consider scheduling visits for a specified length of time to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors. During indoor visitation, facilities should limit visitor movement in the facility. For example, visitors should not walk around different halls of the facility.

CMS and CDC continue to recommend that facilities, residents, and families follow the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, including staying at least 6 feet away from others (physical distancing). This continues to be the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly if not everyone has been fully vaccinated. However, it is acknowledged the toll that separation and isolation has taken. It is also acknowledged that nothing is a substitute for physical contact, such as a warm embrace between a resident and a loved one. Therefore, if a 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. Regardless, visitors should physically distance themselves from other residents and staff in the facility.

The decision trees below provide paths for visitation decisions.



*Note: compassionate care visits, essential caregivers, and visits required under state and federal disability rights laws, should be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident’s vaccination status, the county’s COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.

Narrative for outbreak decision tree

- If your facility has a new COVID-19 case among residents or staff, immediately suspend all visitation and begin outbreak testing. Compassionate care visits, essential caregivers, and visits required under state and federal disability rights laws should be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident’s vaccination status, the county’s COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.
 - If the first round of outbreak testing identifies any additional COVID-19 cases in other areas or units of the facility, indoor visitation should be suspended for all residents (vaccinated and unvaccinated) until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing. Compassionate care visits, essential caregivers, and visits required under state and federal disability rights laws should be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident’s vaccination status, the county’s COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.
 - If the first round of outbreak testing does not identify any additional COVID-19 cases in other areas or units of the facility, indoor visitation should remain suspended in the outbreak area/unit until the area/unit meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing. Indoor visitation can resume for residents in areas/units with no COVID-19 cases.

LONG-TERM CARE VISITATION GUIDANCE FLOWCHART FOR OUTBREAK STATUS

Compassionate care visits, essential caregivers, and visits required under state and federal disability rights laws should be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident's vaccination status, the county's COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.



Minnesota Department of Health | health.mn.gov | 651-201-5000
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.