

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Indoor and Outdoor Visitation for Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF)

This document provides best practice recommendations for indoor and outdoor visitation in intermediate care facilities (ICF) in the District of Columbia. The following measures should be taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission when visitation occurs. **Except for current mandates in effect under a Mayor's Order or other existing local or federal regulation, any definitive action statements made in this guidance (e.g., "must") are considered essential best practice recommendations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.** Restrictions on visitation do not apply to compassionate care situations and essential visitors or personnel, as determined by Department of Disability Services (DDS).

Guidelines for Safe Visitation

- **All visitors must wear a well-fitting face mask while inside the facility, regardless of their vaccination status or personal history of COVID-19 infection.**
- Outdoor visitation is still preferred over indoor when possible.
- When choosing a visitation space (e.g., person supported's room, a dedicated visitation space, or outdoors), facilities should consider the building's structure or outdoor area's layout and the needs of the persons supported.
- The facility must convey information on safe visitation practices to visitors at the start of their visit.
- There must not be any new facility onset COVID-19 cases (suspected or confirmed) in anyone who has been in the ICF (person residing in the facility, direct care staff, visitor, etc.) for two consecutive weeks.
- The ICF must not be undergoing testing related to an outbreak.
- Facilities must maintain a record of the vaccination status of persons supported, direct care staff and other healthcare personnel. Maintaining this information for frequent visitors is also recommended.
- Collect and document visitors' full names, phone number, full home address and the email and name of the person they are visiting. Maintain records for 30 days to assist with contact tracing.
 - The ICF must be able to furnish contact tracing data to DC Health (in accordance with [D.C. Official Code § 7-139 in Subchapter II. Prevention of Spread of Communicable Diseases](#)) within 12 hours of it being requested.
- Facilities should have a 14-day supply of all personal protective equipment (PPE) that would be necessary to respond to an outbreak without dependence on public health stockpiles.
- **An individual is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after completion of a COVID-19 vaccination series (after the second dose of a 2-dose series, or after one dose of a single-dose vaccine). Anyone who does not meet the definition of fully vaccinated must follow guidance for unvaccinated persons.**

Considerations for visits to fully vaccinated persons supported (who are not immunocompromised)¹

- While alone in the person supported's room or the facility's designated visitation room, persons supported, and their visitor(s) can choose to have close contact (including touch) but must wear masks.
- While in the facility, visitors should wear masks and maintain physical distance of 6 feet from other healthcare personnel and other persons supported that are not part of their group at all

¹ **Immunocompromised** means having a weakened immune system due to a medical condition or from taking medications that suppress the immune system. This includes, but is not limited to: people on chemotherapy, people with blood cancers like leukemia, people who have had an organ transplant or stem cell transplant, and people on dialysis.

times.

- While outside, persons supported and their visitor(s) can choose to have close contact (including touch) and to not wear masks, as long as they maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet from other healthcare personnel and other persons supported.
- Participation in gatherings with other residents and families can occur with the following considerations:
 - **If all participants are verified to be fully vaccinated:**
 - Masks are only needed when indoors.
 - Physical distancing is only required (for persons supported and their visitors) during meals when masks are removed (i.e., when actively eating or drinking).
 - If any participants are unvaccinated or have an unverified vaccination status, then all participants must wear masks and maintain six feet of physical distancing from others. If the activity includes a meal, masks must be worn when not actively eating or drinking.
- Family meals with a person supported and their visitor(s) can occur outdoors without use of face masks or physical distancing if all visitors are also fully vaccinated
 - Other persons supported from the same household can also join, if fully vaccinated.

Considerations for visits to unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, and immunocompromised¹ persons supported

- The safest approach for unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, and immunocompromised persons supported is for everyone to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing and to wear masks.
 - While alone in the person supported's room or the facility's designated visitation room, the person supported can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their unvaccinated visitor(s), as long as each participant keeps their mask on.
 - While outside, persons supported and their visitor(s) can choose to have close contact (including touch), as long as each participant keeps their mask on.
- Participation in gatherings with other persons supported and families can occur if:
 - All participants wear masks
 - Groups (e.g., a person supported and their visitor[s]) maintain six feet of distance from other groups, regardless of group members' vaccination status and location of activity (indoors or outdoors).
- Family meals with an unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or vaccinated immunocompromised person supported and their visitor(s) can occur outdoors if:
 - The visitor(s) wear face masks when not eating.
 - The visitor(s) remain at least 6 feet from the person supported.
 - Other unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or vaccinated immunocompromised persons supported from the same household are not present.

Prior to initiating indoor visitation

- Notify families that indoor visitation is occurring in the ICF.
- The notification should include:
 - Precautions being taken to keep persons living in the ICF safe.
 - Expectations and requirements for visitors, describing at minimum:
 - The symptom screening process.
 - All terms of indoor and outdoor visitation, including mask and social distancing requirements, how to summon staff if needed, and what will cause a visitor to be denied entry.
 - Steps visitors must take before the visit, upon arrival, and during the visit.

When indoor visitation begins

- Limit indoor visitors to people who can comply with mask and social distancing requirements.
- Limit indoor visitation to areas that allow for appropriate social distancing.
 - The space must have proper ventilation (open windows, etc.).
 - The visitation area must only be used in accordance with the vaccination status considerations appropriate for each person supported.
- If the person supported is in a single-person room, visitation may occur in their room.
- Visits for persons supported who share a room should ideally be conducted outside the person's room.
 - If visitation is occurring in a designated area in the facility, facilities should consider scheduling visits so that multiple visits are not occurring simultaneously, to the extent possible.
 - If in-room visitation must occur (e.g., the person supported is unable to leave the room), an unvaccinated roommate should not be present during the visit. If neither of the persons supported are able to leave the room, facilities should attempt to enable in-room visitation while maintaining recommended infection prevention and control practices, including physical distancing and the use of masks for source control.
- More than one person supported may have a visitor(s) in the facility (excluding a person supported's room), as long as there is sufficient space to allow for social distancing (see "Considerations for visits" sections on pages 1 and 2).
- Facilities must perform screening for any visitors or non-medical service providers before entering the ICF, regardless of their vaccination status. Facilities must:
 - Screen all visitors and service providers.
 - Screen for fever and other symptoms of COVID-19 infection.²
 - **Visitors who have symptoms or known close contact with a COVID-19 positive person within the last 14 days may not enter the facility, regardless of their vaccination status or personal history of COVID-19 infection.**
 - Visitors must not be in a quarantine period due to exposure to a person with COVID-19 or because of travel.
 - For full guidance on **Screening in a Healthcare Setting**, **Screening Tool Guidance**, and **Guidance for Travel**, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - Visitors should be reminded to wear a mask that does not have an exhalation valve, and to make sure the mask covers their nose and mouth.
 - Have visitors perform hand hygiene upon entering and exiting the ICF.

Considerations for visitors

- Visitors must wear masks during the entire visit and maintain 6 feet from the person living in the ICF, unless the person supported is fully vaccinated (see "Considerations for visits" sections on pages 1 and 2).
- Visitors must be limited to the designated visitation area.
- Visitors must wear masks and maintain 6 feet of social distance if they participate in any group activities.
- Visitors may participate in family meals if they are fully vaccinated.

² **Symptoms of COVID-19** may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

After indoor visitation

- Cleaning of the room or area should occur after the visit is completed and prior to allowing other persons supported, who were did not included with visitation activities, to enter the room or area where the visit occurred.
- The ICF must clean and disinfect high touch surfaces (e.g., light switches, elevator buttons, door handles) in the facility at least once a shift.

Visitation during an outbreak

- If there is suspected or confirmed transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (or any other infectious disease) within an ICF, indoor visitation must not occur. DC Health must be consulted to determine if visitation can take place outdoors or at a location outside the facility.

Notification of a COVID-19 exposure

- Visitors must notify the ICF if they develop symptoms of or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of their visit.
- ICF staff must notify visitors of outbreaks in the ICF, should such an event occur within 14 days of a visit, and recommend the visitor(s) seek testing.

Exclusions

- Visitors who cannot comply with face covering, social distancing, and other facility requirements must not participate in indoor or outdoor visitation.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.