

Social Isolation Information Sheet for Residents With Dementia in Long-Term Care Communities



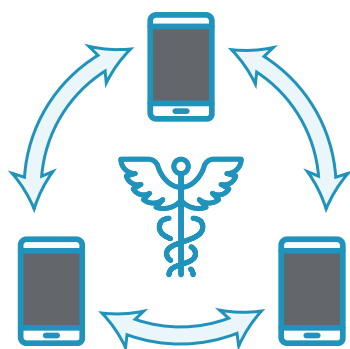
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), long-term care (LTC) communities may be at high risk of being affected by respiratory pathogens like the virus that causes the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).¹ This is due to their congregate nature and the fact that they serve older adults often with underlying chronic medical conditions.¹ Accordingly, the CDC recommends remaining at least 6 feet apart from others while cautioning that those living in a community setting that is not allowing visitors may commonly feel socially isolated.^{1,2}

Will COVID-19 Affect Residents With Dementia Differently?

According to the American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine, the post-acute and LTC patient and resident population is the most vulnerable to the emotional impact of isolation, and that quarantines, masks, gowns, special procedures, and new equipment may trigger traumatic reactions.³ Residents with dementia are at an even higher risk of not responding well to changes in routines, staffing patterns, and other potential adjustments.³ This may increase the likelihood of behavioral symptoms and injury.³ According to the CDC, changes in behavior or worsening symptoms of dementia should be evaluated because they can indicate worsening stress and anxiety, as well as COVID-19 or other infections.⁴

What Can LTC Communities Do to Support Residents With Dementia?

In general, the CDC suggests that health care providers can help connect people with family and loved ones to lower distress and feelings of social isolation.² The CDC states that LTC communities should provide information about COVID-19 and strategies for managing stress and anxiety.^{1,5} There are several strategies specifically for residents with dementia that may help during COVID-19.⁶ This information sheet intends to provide a non-exhaustive resource of suggestions for how to help your residents with dementia through these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.



To allow beneficiaries to receive a wider range of services from their doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has broadened access to Medicare telehealth services.⁷ As a result, Medicare can pay for office, hospital, and other visits furnished via telehealth across the country and including in patients' places of residence. Nursing homes do not need to apply for a waiver to use telehealth and telemedicine services.⁷ You can access the Long-Term Care Nursing Homes Telehealth and Telemedicine Tool Kit [here](#), and for more general telemedicine information, access and download our Simple Guide to Navigating Telemedicine [here](#).

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AMDA has released a resource on how to manage the impact of COVID-19 on residents with dementia.⁶ Please consider discussing these suggestions with residents at your discretion and use your judgment to determine whether they are appropriate for your residents:



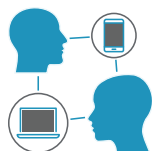
Remaining Calm

Tone of voice and body language may be important to consider when interacting with residents who may struggle to interpret visual or verbal means of communication. Certain emotions in staff members may negatively impact residents with dementia, leading to increased behavioral symptoms such as resistance to care and even aggressive behaviors. Thus, it may be important to remain calm and positive when interacting with residents and staff.⁶



Assisting With Care

Assistance with activities of daily living may be the only social interaction for residents with dementia if visitation and group activities are restricted. When assisting these residents with their basic needs, mobility, and medication, it may be helpful to avoid helping residents with activities they can do on their own. Rushing and/or overstimulating residents may also be something to avoid. During care interactions, it is likely that personal protective equipment will be required. Consider reminding residents that such equipment is needed to keep them and those around them healthy.⁶



Simulating Visits

Residents with dementia may need repeated reassurance when worried. Phone calls or videoconferencing several times a week may not be enough for these residents. Playing recorded messages from friends and family to simulate their presence can help reassure the resident and help them feel less worried. Such messages are also a good means for a resident's loved ones to assist with their care remotely. Topics for recorded messages can include reminders about hygiene, the importance of social distancing, or reassurance that the family is doing well.⁶



Establishing New Routines

Changes in the daily routine can be challenging for residents with dementia and keeping a consistent schedule may be helpful. Mealtimes, food choices, keeping the timing of activities of daily living the same, and playing familiar music may also help. Overall, maintaining a resident's sense of familiarity may be beneficial.⁶

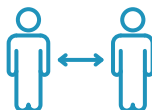
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The American Health Care Association (AHCA) and the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) have released a resource on how to help residents stay connected during the COVID-19 crisis, and recommends practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, and other safety measures when engaging in the activities described below.⁸ This information is relevant to residents in general, and thus may apply to residents with dementia. Please use your judgment to determine whether these suggestions are appropriate for residents with dementia, and always refer to CMS, CDC, and relevant public health authority guidance to decide whether these suggestions are appropriate for your facility and patients:



Using Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor open spaces may be a great place for residents and families to connect. For example, parking lots or grassy areas can be adapted to support social distancing and allow for interaction. Visual cues such as lines on the ground or spaced chairs may be an excellent way to remind residents and their visitors about social distancing as they enjoy the outdoors.⁸



Modifying Indoor Spaces

Consider adapting indoor spaces to avoid compromising social distancing while allowing for increased interaction. Visitation areas, common areas, and activity rooms may all be rearranged to accommodate the current situation. Ensuring that hallways are open and free of objects can help residents maintain social distancing while moving through them. Consider using visual cues such as arrows or lines to help direct residents.⁸



Adapting Activities

Certain activities can be adapted to support social distancing. Some ideas include⁸:

- A knitting club
- Physical exercises such as yoga or dance
- Certain outdoor activities may be appropriate, such as gardening
- Tea time, ice cream social, or happy hour
- Group movie viewing

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Other Resources:

- CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/novel-coronavirus-2019-Nursing-Homes-Preparedness-Checklist_3_13.pdf
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) webinar on supporting loved ones in LTC: <https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2020/tele-town-hall-coronavirus.html>
- American Health Care Association (AHCA) coronavirus resource: https://www.ahcancal.org/facility_operations/disaster_planning/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx
- AMDA: The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine coronavirus resource: <https://paltc.org/COVID-19>
- Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) COVID-19 resources: <https://www.gapna.org/resources/covid-19-resources>
- LeadingAge coronavirus resources: <https://leadingage.org/covid19?ga=2.131180559.1243655778.1588376818-233875450.1588376818>
- National Association of Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care (NADONA) COVID-19 quick reference resources: <https://www.nadona.org/covid-19-quick-reference-resources/>
- American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing (AAPACN) coronavirus updates and essential resources for LTPAC: <https://www.aapacn.org/coronavirus-resources-for-ltpac>

In the wake of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to support the needs of long-term care community residents. Acadia Pharmaceuticals Inc. is passionate about supporting the lives of patients and those that care for them, and we hope these considerations may be helpful as they navigate these challenging times.

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes. Updated May, 2020. Accessed June 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coping with Stress. Updated April 2020. Accessed June 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
3. AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. Strategies for Mitigating the Emotional Impact of COVID-19. Updated March 2020. Accessed June 2020. <https://paltc.org/sites/default/files/Strategies%20for%20Mitigating%20the%20Emotional%20Impact%20of%20COVID-19.pdf>
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6. AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. Caring for PALTC Residents with Dementia During the COVID-19 Outbreak. Updated March 2020. Accessed June 2020. <https://paltc.org/sites/default/files/Caring%20for%20Residents%20With%20Dementia.pdf>
7. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Long-Term Care Nursing Homes Telehealth and Telemedicine Tool Kit. Updated March 27, 2020. Accessed June 2020. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-19-nursing-home-telehealth-toolkit.pdf>
8. The American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living. Keeping People Connected: Innovative Methods Using an Infection Control and Prevention Mindset. Updated May 28, 2020. Accessed June 2020. https://www.ahcancal.org/facility_operations/disaster_planning/Documents/Keeping-People-Connected.pdf