

April 30, 2021

Families, friends, residents and staff.

Earlier this week we conducted another series of COVID-19 testing, negative tests will remove us from “Response” and allow a return to Phase 1. On Thursday we hosted another Pfizer clinic for the individuals who received the COVID-19 therapeutic Bamlanivimab and have waiting for their second vaccine. This vaccination clinic was an important step in regards to following CMS guidance. Fully vaccinated residents will have less stringent restrictions which were released this week. Individuals must wait two weeks after their final COVID-19 vaccine before considered “fully vaccinated.” We will walk through a preliminary review of recent CMS changes, there is a significant amount of information to digest and on Wednesday, May 5 we will have a family meeting via Zoom to discuss and answer questions. A few highlights include:

**Visitations:** Monitoring, scheduling and documented pre-screening is currently still required with disinfection after visit. Fully vaccinated residents may have a close contact including touch. Fully vaccinated individuals may now remove their masks when visiting indoors provided both the resident and the visitor are **fully vaccinated** and they are **alone in the resident’s room or visitation space**. The visitor must continue to mask around other residents, staff, and individuals in the healthcare setting.

**Activities/ Dining:** If all individuals attending an activity are fully vaccinated, they may choose to forego masking and social distancing during the activity. If all individuals in the dining area are fully vaccinated, they may choose to forego masking and social distancing during dining. If any individuals in the activity or dining setting are unvaccinated, all must wear masks and social distance.

**Testing:** Protocols for testing of symptomatic individuals and testing staff and residents in the event of an outbreak have not changed. Recommendations around “expanded screening testing” (routine testing) of staff have been changed. Fully vaccinated staff may be excluded from routine testing of staff according to county positivity rates. Unvaccinated staff must continue to be tested routinely according to county positivity rates.

Please note, while these changes are a significant step towards normalcy we are still required to screen all visitors and maintain a safe environment. Until further notice we will continue to schedule visitations.

Kim Reardon, Memory Care Manager, has provided her monthly letter. This month she is focusing on visitation and opportunities to enhance your visiting experience.

Wednesday’s Family Meeting will begin at 6 pm via Zoom. We created an account to ensure we are not timed out of the session as previously experienced. To participate in the meeting please click the link or manually enter the Meeting ID and Passcode.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3937357941?pwd=U0JpSIBJZ0o3K05UV0JXNG5QeUNNUT09>

Meeting ID: 393 735 7941

Passcode: 8675309

Kindly,

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## Should I visit my loved one with Dementia?

We receive questions from families asking if they should visit or how often they should visit with their loved one who has dementia. Frequently heard questions include, “Why should I visit, they don’t know me anymore?” Or “I go and visit and they don’t talk to me...they sleep the whole time I’m there, what’s the point...They won’t miss me.” These statements may be true but individuals with Dementia still enjoy visitors. Apprehension is understandable and preventing these barriers from becoming an obstacle to visiting enables a beneficial experience, but it does take skill. “Normal” societal rules don’t always apply. Visits at this stage are all about engagement. So, learning how to be engaging with them becomes important for both you and your loved one.

Here are some tips and ideas how to have a positive and engaging visit with you loved one:

1. Limit visitors to 1 or 2 people at a time. Too many people can become overwhelming.
2. Schedule your visits for the time of day when your loved one is best at interaction. Talking with staff can help you know when the visit would be most beneficial and when they would be able to participate most effectively. Visiting around their times may not always be convenient for you but if they are not able to participate in the visit it becomes unenjoyable for both of you.
3. Minimize distractions by keeping the environment calm and quiet. Turning off the TV or loud music minimizes distraction.
4. Don’t rush conversations, give them extra time to speak or answer questions, follow their lead even if it’s the same conversation you’ve already had.
5. Instead of asking them too many questions, comment on items in their room and follow their lead on where the conversation goes.
6. If Covid-19 restrictions allow: give hugs, gentle touches or even massage their arms or shoulders if they enjoy it.
7. If looking to do activities with them, try ones they enjoy such as: watching their favorite show or movie, reading a book or magazine, do a puzzle or board game, look at a photo album or listen to music together.

If your loved one is in the later stages of the disease prioritize presence over substance. Your loved one may no longer be able to communicate verbally but the sound of your voice or the touch of your hand are often soothing and enjoyable for them.

A quality visit doesn't have to involve conversation. It might just be sitting, holding hands and listening to your loved one's favorite music. It might be a hug. It might involve combing and styling their hair. Other ideas can be as simple as allowing them to feel different textured fabric to touch, or scents to smell that can bring up special memories (such as baking a cake or their favorite perfume). Just your physical presence in the room can be rewarding and enjoyable for your loved one, and leave you with a good feeling too. Utilizing techniques may enhance the quality of visits for you and your loved one. Remember the good times and hold onto happy memories.

Whether or not your loved one remembers you or the fact that you visited them ten minutes ago, your visit will have had a positive impact. So, keep on visiting because each visit has a positive impact. While it is encouraged to continue visiting with your loved one throughout their disease, please remember during this time we are still required to follow COVID-19 guideline and scheduling visits is mandatory.