

May 28, 2021

Families, friends, residents and staff,

Our PCR positive test county rate is 2.9% and the rate of new cases per 100,000 is 190. Although the rates show some improvement these figures confirm COVID-19 remains a societal concern. The government continues to implement various mandates such as uploading vaccination documentation and uploading weekly testing registries but at this time visitation requirements remain the same:

- Visits, including off-site, must be scheduled in advance.
- Screening will be conducted when scheduling visit and day of visit.
- Visitors are asked to remain in designated visiting area. Please inform staff if you would like to transition visit to the outdoors and you will be escorted outside.
- While outside, please do not leave the resident alone UNLESS you know the resident does not have a cognitive impairment.
- While visiting in a resident's room, please DO NOT leave the room without an escort unless it is an emergency.
- Please follow our masking and distancing requirements when applicable.
- Please speak with Jill or Jeff regarding visitation questions of specific requests.

As weather allows, residents have been enjoying the backyard garden area. Last year's strict requirements made it incredibly difficult to bring multiple residents outdoors simultaneously. With such a high percentage of eligible residents and staff being fully vaccinated, with caution, we are able to utilize the elevator more liberally and bring multiple residents outdoors. The ability to go outdoors seems simple, but was remarkably challenging with CMS requirements and being a multi-level building; we are very pleased to have looser restrictions. To improve the resident experience, our management team has signed-up for various projects to revitalize the garden. We have various donation accounts we are utilizing to purchase new swings, tables and chairs for residents and staff. If you would like to learn more about our donation accounts and how to allocate funds to a particular account please speak with Diane in the Business Office.

With the inability for families to freely enter and meet with various individuals we would like to try a program of monthly Family Meetings. During the meetings we will have one or multiple managers present to meet and ask questions. The first three meetings will be June 16 with Brian Lariviere (Maintenance Director) July 14 Clinical Nursing Team and August 18 Laura Vaillancourt (Social Services).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3937357941?pwd=U0JpS1BJZ0o3K05UV0JXNG5QeUNNUT09>

Meeting ID: 393 735 7941

Passcode: 8675309

Kim Reardon, Memory Care Director, has written her monthly newsletter focusing on "Sundowning." If you have Memory Care related questions or are interested in learning about our Music and Memory Program please contact Kim Reardon.

Thank you,

Jeffrey Lacroix

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What is Sundowning?

We often hear about Sundowning when we hear about dementia but what is it?

Sundowning is a term to describe group of symptoms that often occurs in someone with dementia as daylight begins to fade. These symptoms can include agitation, restlessness, irritability, and confusion. Sundowning typically starts early evening and continues into the night. Although the exact reason why sundowning happens is not known, researchers believe it's a disruption in circadian rhythms or a disruption to a person's natural clock. Circadian rhythms signal when to wake up and to sleep at night making it hard for people with Alzheimer's to fall asleep and stay in bed. When this is disrupted, it can be both irritating and frustrating for them, which is acted out through their behaviors. Sundowning is temporary in that it generally occurs during a certain period of time usually in the late afternoon or evening but then passes. While the cause is unknown, researchers suggest several possible triggers:

End-of-day activity

A flurry of activity toward the end of the day may lead to anxiety and confusion.

Fatigue, boredom, or unmet needs

End-of-day exhaustion, or a lack of things to do late in the day, may also be a contributor. If they are having an unmet need such as hunger or needing to go to the bathroom and are unable to express they may present with behaviors.

Low light

As the sun goes down, the quality of available light may diminish and shadows may increase, making it more difficult for someone with poor eyesight to see. This may increase confusion and agitation.

Coping with Sundowning

When visiting with your loved one and they having Sundowning symptoms here are some hints to help you get through it:

If they become agitated, listen calmly to their concerns and frustrations. Try to reassure them everything is OK and distract them from stressful or upsetting events.

Reduce noise, clutter, or the number of people in the room.

Try to distract the person with a favorite snack, object, or activity. For example, offer a drink, suggest a simple task like folding towels, or turn on a familiar TV show (but not the news or other shows that might be upsetting).

Make this time of the day a quiet time. You might play soothing music, read, or go for a walk. You could also have a family member or friend call during this time.

Close the curtains or blinds at dusk to minimize shadows and the confusion they may cause. Turn on lights to help minimize shadows.

For families dealing with their loved one who displaying Sundowning this can be frustrating but always remember as frustrating and as it may be for you, your loved one is having a harder time.