

Introduction:

Merriment Assisted Living Residence is taking necessary precautions to protect the health of our residents, caregivers, staff and visitors. We have strong protocols in place and are following all guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health authorities, to ensure a safe environment. Additionally, the State of Florida has provided guidance to assisted living communities related to policy and procedure measures regarding visitation requirements.

In order to continue our efforts and inform you of the requirements set forth in the “No Patient Left Alone Act”, *All assisted living facilities must comply with the regulations set forth in Chapter 408.823, Florida Statutes*, we have published an outline of our policies and procedures related to visitation.

We remain committed to efforts involving promotion of connectivity through visitation of loved ones within our community. We will continue to keep you informed of any new developments that take place. Thank you for your continued support and partnering with us through this journey.

Infectious Control and Education for Visitors:

It is the policy of **Merriment Assisted Living Residence** to always practice infection control and universal precautions. One of the most important and effective practices for infection Control and transmission of bloodborne pathogens is handwashing.

Listed below are some other important practices and principles that have been known to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and help prevent unknowing transmission of infection. We encourage you to join our efforts in reducing the risk of infection by practicing these measures as much as possible – both inside and outside of our facility.

- All visitors and employees must use Universal Precautions (treat all human blood and body fluids as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other Bloodborne Pathogens).
- Personal Protection Equipment must be used. Visitors and employees must wear gloves when handling residents and their belongings.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment between use. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, sinks, faucets, chairs, computers and phones.
- When surfaces are dirty, clean them with a disinfectant that is approved by the EPA to eliminate the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Avoid visiting your loved one if you are ill or have been around someone who is ill during the last 14 days.
- Practice physical distance of a minimum of 6 feet or more to reduce risk of exposure.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask.
- Avoid gatherings where physical distancing cannot be maintained before visiting a loved one.
- When you cough or sneeze use the inside of your elbow.

Visitation Policies and Procedures:

To help reduce exposure of COVID-19 in our facility, we have taken the following steps:

- Instruct sick workers to stay home.
- Screen workers and residents daily for signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Test workers and residents weekly for COVID-19.
- Quarantine workers and residents if they have been exposed to an individual with COVID-19.
- Ask visitors to inform the facility if they develop a fever or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of their visit.
- Provide handwashing facilities and alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or 70% isopropanol throughout the facility.
- Regularly clean & disinfect frequently touched surfaces in resident rooms, staff workstations & common areas.
- Use hospital-grade cleaning chemicals.
- Ensure workers have and use any personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to perform their jobs safely.
- Continually monitor the facility's stock of PPE, burn rate, and supply chains.
- Train workers on COVID-19 policies and procedures in a language they understand.
- Ensure policies encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.

Visitors will be screened upon entry and will only be allowed in if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19. During the screening process, we will ask you some basic questions about any symptoms. Visitors with a fever, cough or shortness of breath, or whose responses to screening questions indicate an elevated level of risk for COVID-19 exposure or infection, will not be permitted to enter.

Visitors are not required to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.

On the day of the visit, visitors are strongly encouraged to self-screen and should not arrive for visitation if you are experiencing or have experienced in the past 10 days, any of the following symptoms:

- Elevated temperature of 99.1° Fahrenheit or above
- 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
- Diarrhea

Merriment Assisted Living Residence has designated the Executive Director as the person responsible for staff adherence to visitation policies and procedures.

Physical Distancing and Mask Requirements:

Physical distancing refers to the practice of keeping space between yourself and others to reduce the chance of contact with those who knowingly or unknowingly carry an illness.

Physical distancing is for your protection as much as those that may come into contact with places you have been and touched. The virus can have up to a 14-day incubation period where you may feel no symptoms at all. During this time when you feel fine, you could be spreading the virus to others unknowingly. Visitors should adhere to physical distancing recommendation during visitation when possible.

Per health authority guidance, wearing a face mask can greatly slow the spread of COVID-19. To be effective, the CDC states that a face mask should cover the mouth and nose and fit snugly against the face. Visitors are required to wear a mask even when vaccinated due to the potential of still contracting COVID-19 when vaccinated and possible risk transmission to others. Visitors are required to wear masks over their nose and mouth at all times when not eating or drinking.

General Visitation Requirements:

Visitation can be conducted through different means based on the facility's structure and residents' needs, such as in resident rooms, dedicated visitation spaces, and outdoors. However, visitors and residents are required to adhere to COVID-19 infection prevention measures during the visit.

Regardless of vaccination status, visitors who do not pass screening criteria or who refuse to comply with any visitation requirements will not be permitted to visit.

Visitors should refrain from visiting if they have been in close contact with anyone who has tested positive for or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 for the duration noted by health authorities.

Visitors should alert the community if they develop fever or other symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 in the 14 days following visitation.

Visitors must arrive through the designated entrance and confirm they are not experiencing any symptoms related to Covid-19 as outlined in the education document and self-screening instructions. Visitors should clean their hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or perform hand washing upon arrival.

Visitors who display symptoms when entering the community will be denied entry and should leave immediately.

Merriment Assisted Living Residence reserves the right to suspend in-person visits of a specific visitor, if the visitor violates any of our policies and procedures.

Visitation Spaces and Expectations:

There are several options and spaces for visitation to take place in such as in resident rooms, communal visitation spaces, and outdoor spaces, however outdoor visitation is preferred, as these visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow.

During indoor visitation within a resident's room or communal space, visitors should be aware of space available within room and coordinate visitation times and number of visitors based on the space available within the room that will be used for visitation.

Visitors do not have to maintain physical distancing with the person they are visiting unless the visitor or individual being visited prefers to not have physical contact and maintain distancing.

During visitation, visitors must agree to adhere to infection control guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading the infection by:

- Adhering to physical distancing of a minimum of 6ft from other residents and associates when moving to the space they will be visiting in; wearing a mask at all times; and complying with any verbal instruction provided by staff and management in order to promote safety and reduce the risk of infection.

In order to promote the well-being of residents and associates, visitation may be temporarily modified during certain situations. Visitors will be notified of modifications by the Executive Director or designee if any of the following situations occur per health authority guidance:

- The resident being visited has symptoms of COVID-19.
- The resident is in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19
- The residence has an active outbreak and/or the residence has a recent COVID-19 case or outbreak of infections.

Consensual physical contact between a resident, client, or patient and the visitor is allowed.

Merriment Assisted Living Residence will set a limit on the total number of visitors allowed in the facility at any given time based on the ability of staff to safely screen and monitor and the space to accommodate the essential caregiver visitors.

Essential Caregivers:

In addition to any other visitation authorized by the facility, **Merriment Assisted Living Residence** allows in-person visitation by an essential caregiver for up to 2-hours daily.

It is preferred that the 2-hour visit occurs between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, Sunday through Saturday. Exceptions to the 2-hour visitation policy may be allowed on a case-by-case basis, for end-of-life residents. These exceptions will be discussed and agreed upon in writing by the facility's designee and the resident's responsible party.

A resident may designate a visitor who is a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as an essential caregiver who can continue to visit even when visitation is modified as outlined above or unless the resident objects to visitation.

Residents should notify the Director of Assisted Living or Assisted Living Manager if they are interested in designating an individual as an essential caregiver. No more than one essential caregiver visitor may be designated per resident.

Merriment Assisted Living Residence does not require an essential caregiver to provide necessary care to a resident, client or patient.

In-person visitations in all the following circumstances are allowed, unless the resident, client, or patient objects:

- End-of-life situations.
- A resident, client, or patient who was living with family before being admitted to the provider's care is struggling with the change in environment and lack of in-person family support.
- The resident, client, or patient is making one or more major medical decisions.
- A resident, client, or patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died.
- A resident, client, or patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink which was previously provided by a family member or caregiver.
- A resident, client, or patient who used to talk and interact with others is seldom speaking.