

Admissions During COVID-19 Pandemic

The purpose of this document is to share clear and condensed guidance from the CDC* and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to skilled nursing providers regarding accepting new admissions or readmissions and is consistent with conversations with the Wisconsin Hospital Association and other health systems. Tools within this document will help providers decide how to safely handle new admissions and to triage the infection control process recommendation in order to avoid the spread of COVID-19 within our long-term care facilities. This guidance is not a requirement and is strictly informational in your individual facility's decision on if/when you are able to safely accept an admission. Consultation and customization of your facility's protocol with your local Department of Public Health is recommended.

[Admission Flowchart Here](#)

All new admissions from either the hospital or community should be considered a potential positive and placed in isolation for 14 days. When deciding on admissions, each facility should factor in their available PPE, staffing, and physical layout of your building. A multi-disciplinary admissions review process is recommended.

Residents will generally fall within one of three tiers within your facility.

Tier One: Applies to-

- Current residents who have resided in your facility for more than 14 days and who are asymptomatic. These residents are currently living in general areas where no symptomatic residents are being cared for.
- Residents who have been removed from isolation precautions and do not exhibit any respiratory symptoms or fever.

Precautions:

Residents should be encouraged to be in their rooms, and to cover their mouth with a tissue when staff enter. Contact (mask and gloves) precautions should be used when entering resident's room, utilizing social distancing when possible. Frequent hand washing for both caregivers and residents. If a resident must leave their room, have them don a mask, if able, and practice social distancing. Disinfect area afterwards.

Tier Two: Applies to-

- Admissions who do not exhibit respiratory symptoms or symptoms of COVID-19
- Admissions who tested negative *and* do not have any respiratory symptoms or symptoms of COVID-19.
- Admissions *with* respiratory or COVID-like symptoms with a non-COVID diagnosis explaining the symptoms *without* a confirmed test

Precautions:

Resident should be placed on isolation precautions for 14 days with staff frequently assessing for COVID-like symptoms and respiratory symptoms during this time. New or readmissions do not require separate staff dedicated to caring for them, although keeping the same staff caring for this category of residents is recommended. They do not require a separate wing or unit; single rooms using a commode if no private bathroom is also recommended. If this is not possible, cohort those residents together. Droplet precautions should be used when interacting.

Tier Three: Applies to-

- Admissions *with* respiratory or COVID-like symptoms *without* a confirmed test
- Admissions *with* respiratory or COVID-like symptoms *with* a confirmed positive test

Precautions: Residents with known or with suspected COVID-19 can be admitted to a skilled nursing facility as long as the SNF can:

- Meet the demands of staffing
- Meet the necessary PPE and infection control demands of positive/suspected residents
- Have ability to create completely or near completely separate wings, ideally but not necessarily with negative pressure rooms,
- Staffed by individuals who are dedicated to provide care in that wing and not rotate to other units
- Staffed by an experienced and active Medical Director as well as a respiratory therapist overseeing care
- Leave housekeeping supplies/ carts on the dedicated unit.
- Sanitize dining carts when leaving units. Dishes, utensils washed and sanitized separately from other units.

Droplet precautions for individuals include, N95s (preferably) or surgical masks, gowns, gloves, eye goggles or face shields).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/4220-covid-19-long-term-care-facility-guidance.pdf>