



Should I Take My Loved One Home During the COVID-19 Crisis?

With the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in long-term care facilities, some families are considering taking their loved ones home during this time of crisis. This is a very personal decision, and one for which you will need a plan. You will want to ensure that their care needs are met, and they are safe. Recognize that this arrangement may be for several weeks, or longer.



Things to consider if you want to take your loved one home during this crisis:

- Does your loved one want to leave?** Residents have the right to leave the facility and reside elsewhere if they choose.
 - Talk to the facility about leaving and the ability to return; and get everything in writing.
 - If care is covered by Medicaid, what are your rights for holding your bed (if applicable) and returning at some point in the future?
- Is your home adequately equipped?**
 - Does your loved one need a special bed or other equipment like a wheelchair, shower chair, or elevated toilet seat? Can they maneuver in the bathroom? Can they manage stairs?
- Who will provide the personal care your loved one needs?**
 - Will you provide the care yourself or hire a caregiver? If hiring, do you know that they are available to provide care? What are the costs? How will you pay for it?
 - Many residents need help with their personal needs such as eating, bathing, toileting; as well as with transfers, such as in and out of bed or chairs. If they need help transferring, are you able to safely assist them? Is a second person needed?
- Is there a risk of exposure to COVID-19?**
 - Are your family members practicing social distancing? What happens if someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19 after you get your loved one home?
- Who will oversee their medical care and medications?**
 - Many residents rely on the nursing home's medical director to oversee their care. Will you need to find a doctor in the community?
- What will happen if your family member needs more care than you are able to provide?**
 - Will you bring in additional help, or will they need return to a long-term care facility? Can they return to the facility where they currently live?

Supporting your loved one if they stay in the nursing home:

If you and your loved one decide it is best for them to stay in the nursing home, you can still be an advocate and support them during this time.

- Connect through phone or video chats and send them messages and pictures.
- Ask about visiting in outdoor or dedicated areas.
- Pay attention to their appearance – are they alert, clean, groomed?
- Ask questions about how they spend their day, who is providing care, about what they eat.
- Talk regularly with the facility staff about how things are going in the facility. For example, do they have the necessary supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE)? Are there enough staff available to care for the residents?
- Stay connected with the family council to share information and experiences, communicate with administration, and support residents, staff, and each other.

! *If you notice a change in your loved one's mood or behavior, or physical changes, such significant weight loss, ask for a care planning meeting to discuss your concerns and how they will be addressed.*

Questions or complaints can be directed to your long-term care ombudsman, and your state's survey agency. You can find more information about how you can support your loved one and stay connected at www.theconsumervoice.org.

