



Covid-19 Updates for October 2, 2020

Dear Residents, Families, and Friends of Redstone,

We come to another Friday, and gratefully we have had no additional positive Covid-19 test results here at Redstone. Because things have calmed down a bit again, after this letter we will return to sending you an update every other Friday. As you have seen over the past months, we will not hesitate to provide updates more frequently if there is news to report or if we need to address any changes in policy or status.

Today, let's talk about testing. Because we have now gone more than 14 days with no additional cases, we will only need to test EMPLOYEES to comply with state and federal guidelines. Because the percent positivity rating in Westmoreland County is relatively low, employees will need to be tested on a monthly basis for now. Our next round of testing for employees will take place the week of October 19th. If at any time we do have positive cases, we will once again do our contact tracing and include residents who need to be tested in our testing process.

Being back in the "Green Phase" of reopening means some other good news for us. Beginning this Sunday, in-person visits will phase back in on our North Huntingdon and Greensburg campuses. (Visits were never stopped on our Murrysville campus.) As a reminder, each resident in Personal Care or Skilled Nursing may be scheduled for one visit per week, and families should use the visit scheduling website to schedule their visits. <https://redstonefamilyvisitscheduler.as.me/schedule.php> We know that sometimes you are unable to schedule a visit on a day or at a time that is most convenient for you. We must continue to limit the flow of visitors for our residents, in order to maintain infection control guidelines. Your cooperation in scheduling only one in-person visit per week per resident is appreciated so that we can ensure that every resident in Personal Care or the Nursing Home has the opportunity to have a visit. Remember that you may also schedule one virtual or window visit per week with the resident by using this website.

In last week's letter we mentioned that there are new guidelines related to visitation in nursing homes and personal care homes. These guidelines continue to call for pre-scheduled limited visits in neutral visitor zones, with two visitors. Visits should still take place outdoors when at all possible. On cool sunny days, we will continue to have our visits with residents outdoors. Please plan to dress accordingly. When weather requires, visits will take place in indoor visitor zones. The guidelines are also allowing for additional support from family compassionate caregivers when a resident has shown measurable and recorded decline in two or more areas. Our interdisciplinary teams will be evaluating residents who might be eligible for the compassionate caregiver program, and will reach out to families to discuss this option where appropriate.

We will be able to resume small group activities and reopen some of our public spaces for our residents in Greensburg and North Huntingdon, too. Residents will receive additional information about hours for the gift shops, gyms, and beauty salons. In about two weeks, we will also begin scheduling some outside entertainment to come to perform for our residents. We believe that we can do this safely, and the benefits to wellness are significant. Performers will be screened for wellness upon arrival, and will remain distanced from residents. Performers will perform for only one level of care and residents will need to sign-up and be screened, wear their masks, and remain six feet apart. The entertainment will also be broadcast over the closed circuit television systems so that all residents can enjoy show.

Families of residents in Personal Care and Skilled Nursing have asked about transporting residents to essential medical appointments. We want you to know that we continue to provide free transportation to such appointments for residents in these levels of care. We believe that this is the safest way to protect the social “bubble” of these residents. If a family still wishes to provide transportation to a medical appointment, however, they are permitted to do so.

Health care professionals in this area and around the country are preparing for a surge in cases throughout the fall and winter. While many of these cases will remain asymptomatic, some will not. Our population is particularly fragile when Covid-19 is contracted. Through the night, we heard that President Trump and the First Lady have tested positive for Covid-19. Our prayers are with them that they might recover quickly and smoothly. This does show us, however, that this is a virus that is hard to manage and prevent. The single best way to prevent spreading the virus is to wear a mask when you’re with other people (including all of those whom you don’t live with on a daily basis) and be sure that it covers your nose and mouth. I know it’s inconvenient and uncomfortable, but it truly will save lives. Also remember to wash your hands often and maintain a social distance of 6 feet or more. I believe that our consistency in following these protocols helped us move through our recent positive cases results relatively quickly here at Redstone.

Finally, we’re making progress on ensuring that every employee has received a flu shot. We think this is critically important as we protect our residents. We hope that our families are planning to join us in this effort. We really are in this together as we protect our residents, and one another.

Take care and be well!

Vicki

Vicki Loucks, RN, MSN, MBA
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer
Redstone Presbyterian Seniorcare
Hotline: 724-972-4579 or hotline@redstone.org