



SAINT MARY'S AT ASBURY RIDGE
SAINT MARY'S EAST

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Saint Mary's & COVID-19: Update #51

Hello!

Both Saint Mary's East and Saint Mary's at Asbury Ridge are now in step three of reopening and are actively holding visitation. Testing this week at the East campus identified no new cases of COVID-19. Testing is still ongoing today at Asbury Ridge, but no new cases have been identified so far.

Earlier this week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidance regarding their recommendations for fully vaccinated people. You can review that guidance from the CDC [here](#). Understandably, we are receiving a number of inquiries from families wanting to know if this means they can visit freely with their loved one.

The simple answer? Not yet. The CDC guidance does not affect Saint Mary's directly. The guidance from the CDC is a general statement and does not apply directly to people working or living in healthcare environments like Saint Mary's. Remember that while COVID-19 vaccines are effective, we are still learning a lot about them. Overall and especially for those at an increased risk for severe illness, the CDC recommends continuing the use of wearing a mask, staying six feet apart, and avoiding unnecessary travel as well as poorly ventilated spaces. Additionally, the new guidance only applies to people who are "fully" vaccinated meaning those who have received the required number of doses and are two weeks past receiving their final dose. Saint Mary's was successful in our vaccination efforts but we do have new residents joining us regularly, not all of whom have had the opportunity to receive the vaccine yet.

However, late yesterday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued updated guidance for nursing homes as a result of the new CDC guidelines. The PA Department of Health (DOH) has not yet issued any revisions to their guidance, but we expect this could be coming soon. While we review the new guidance and await direction from the DOH, we will continue to hold scheduled visitations as planned and follow our current policies.

As with everything so far, there will likely still be a number of limitations on nursing homes moving forward but the guidelines and what they mean for visitation seems promising for families and residents. We will let you know of any changes to protocol as soon as we can implement them safely.

Keep hanging in there and have hope. Thank you!