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| **Administrative Policy and Procedure**  | **Subject: Communal Dining**  |
| **Approved by:**  |  |
| **Effective:** 3/13/2020 | **Revised:** 4/2/2021; 7/9/2021 |

**POLICY**

The facility will promote a safe and comfortable meal service for residents to minimize the potential spread of infection and promote quality of meal service to residents. Residents and staff will be provided with education regarding hand hygiene, physical distancing, and any needed monitoring during meal service.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Residents on each unit will be reviewed to identify any special care needs during Meal Service.
2. The facility will facilitate communal dining, to the extent possible, while adhering to the core principles of Covid-19 infection prevention including hand hygiene, masks when not eating, and physical distancing.
3. Communal dining may occur without the use of face coverings (for both residents and staff) or physical distancing *if* everyone is fully vaccinated
* If partially or unvaccinated persons are present in the communal dining area, all individuals will wear a face mask (for residents – face mask as tolerated) and maintain physical distancing when not eating or drinking.
1. Residents may eat in the same room with physical distancing as necessary
* Residents who are fully vaccinated may dine at the same table
* Residents who are partially or unvaccinated will be socially distanced at least 6ft apart
1. Each Unit Manager will maintain a line list of Covid-vaccination status of residents on unit
2. Residents who are capable of feeding themselves and are not at risk for choking will have their meals served in their room if it is their preference
3. Residents who are served meals in their room will be provided with education on the importance of:
* Performing hand hygiene prior to consuming meal
* Utilizing the call bell to alert staff of any difficulties while consuming meal (i.e. coughing, difficulty swallowing etc.)
1. Caregivers will be educated to assist/provide hand hygiene for all residents prior to (and after) meal service and to ensure that the resident’s call bell is within reach.
2. Suction machine will be available and ready for use.
3. Residents who require spoon feeding will be served meals last and caregivers will remain with resident to assist with meal consumption.
4. Unit assignments will reflect staff members specific responsibilities during meal time:
* Tray distribution
* Specific residents to feed
* Corridors/Hallways to monitor during meal
1. Trays will be delivered to units in room order rather than by table number, except for those residents eating in dining room.
2. Residents requiring to be spoon fed, as well as those who prefer to eat in the dining room, may consume meals in the dining room, spaced six feet apart and caregivers will only feed one resident at a time.
3. When necessary, meals may be offered in intervals to allow fewer residents in common areas, and to ensure that the food temperature is maintained within desired range (e.g. if there is an outbreak on the unit).
4. Dining room tables will be sanitized after each meal is completed.
5. Representatives will be notified of changes in meal service during as necessary
6. Every effort will be made to redirect residents living with Dementia to ensure protocols are maintained.

**REFERENCES**

NYSDOH (3/25/2021). Health Advisory: Revised Skilled Nursing Facility Visitation. [updated\_nursing\_home\_visitation\_guidance.pdf (ny.gov)](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/03/updated_nursing_home_visitation_guidance.pdf)

CDC (Updated 4/27/2021). Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to Covid-19 Vaccination. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html

CMS (Rev 4/27/2021). QSO-20-39-NH: Nursing Home Visitation- Covid-19. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

NYSDOH (7/8/2021). Health Advisory: Revised Skilled Nursing Facility Visitation. <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/07/nh_visitation_guidance_-7-8-2021.pdf>