

# How to connect with nursing home patients in quarantine

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(HealthDay)—U.S. nursing homes, assisted living centers and other long-term care facilities have closed their doors to outsiders due to the coronavirus pandemic, making it difficult for residents and their families to stay connected.

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) has some advice for making this difficult situation better.

"Right now, families across the country cannot visit their relatives in long-term care settings, and while they can't be there with them in person, they can, and should, still be there for them," said Charles Fuschillo, president and chief executive officer of the AFA.

"There are other ways that individuals can remain connected with a loved one with Alzheimer's from anywhere," he noted in a foundation news release.

Fuschillo suggested the following:

- **Keep in touch.** Contact the care facility's staff to get regular updates on your loved one and make sure they're safe.
- **Use technology.** There are many new ways to keep in touch with your loved one. Some [care facilities](#) are offering families the opportunity to video chat, such as FaceTime, Skype or Zoom. Ask your loved one's care facility if they offer this type of service. Phone calls, emails and letters are also good ways to stay in touch.
- **Keep connected with photos.** Some facilities are sending photos of residents to their families and also encouraging families to send photos for their loved ones to see. One way to make it fun and engaging is to have themes, such as wearing funny hats.
- **Send care packages.** Wrap up some of your loved one's favorite snacks, trinkets, lotions or activities. Check with the care facility before sending packages to see if there are any items they don't allow for health reasons.

Don't panic and make an impulsive decision. Moving an older adult from a long-term care center and exposing them to more people and places is risky, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Also, the level of care required for long-term care residents is usually higher than the care that can be provided at home. All care facilities are required to have procedures to monitor and prevent infections, and to protect the health of their residents and staff. They will provide you with information about these measures if you ask, according to the AFA.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [COVID-19](#).

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