

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated August 21, 2020

Q: HOW IS COVID-19 BEING ADDRESSED ON CAMPUS?

A: It's important to note that the Deutsches Altenheim campus comprises three entities: Edelweiss Village assisted living, Senior Place adult day health program and German Centre (nursing home and post-hospital rehab). Each entity is subject to its own regulatory agency(ies) and requirements vary accordingly.

Senior Place services were suspended in April. During that time, our staff was in contact with program participants and their families to maintain continuity and provide assistance. Our site re-opened on August 3rd with stringent social distancing and infection control protocols in place. The number of participants is limited at this time as we ease back into a routine. Prior to admittance to the center each day, participants are screened for symptoms. Participants and staff must wear a face mask.

At Edelweiss Village and German Centre, all residents and staff must wear a face mask. German Centre staff are also required to wear protective eyewear when on a residential floor and under certain circumstances, additional PPE may be required.

Q: ARE ALL RESIDENTS AND STAFF BEING TESTED FOR COVID-19?

A: At Edelweiss Village, residents and staff are tested only when they are symptomatic or have been in close contact with someone diagnosed or presumed COVID-positive.

At German Centre, per order of the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health (DPH), statewide baseline testing of all staff was completed on July 19. Currently, a 30% sample of staff is tested bi-weekly. If a positive case is identified among staff, all test-negative residents will be tested. Otherwise, residents are tested if they become symptomatic.

Senior Place participants must provide documentation of a COVID-19 negative test before being considered for re-entry into the program. Staff are included in German Centre's bi-weekly testing sampling.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

A: Residents: At both Edelweiss Village and German Centre, when a resident is tested for the virus, they are placed on droplet precautions, which means staff wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when interacting with them. Residents whose test result is positive are immediately placed in isolation, which means they may not leave the apartment/room and their door remains closed, unless that is unsafe for the occupant(s) of the room. When staff enter the apartment/room, they are required to wear a full complement of PPE: masks, face shields, gowns and gloves, and the resident must also wear a mask when interacting with staff. Whenever possible, we try to move the test-positive resident into a private room or cohort them with another COVID-19 positive resident. At least daily, we review positive and negative test results and make appropriate room changes, if necessary.

Staff: When a member of the staff tests positive for COVID-19, the individual is immediately removed from the work schedule and advised to quarantine at home. They may not return to work for 14 days or when cleared by a negative test result or by their physician. If a German Centre staff member tests positive, per DPH regulations 90% of the staff will be tested for a minimum of two weeks or until there are no additional positive test results. All residents/patients will be tested. COVID-recovered staff and residents are exempt from testing.

Q: ISN'T IT POSSIBLE THAT STAFF ARE BRINGING THE VIRUS INTO THE BUILDING WITH THEM?

A: Yes, it is possible and that is why each staff member is screened for fever and respiratory symptoms as they report to work each shift. Staff members who display symptoms or a temperature over 99° are prohibited from reporting for duty. They are directed to contact their primary care physician for testing and are not allowed to return to work for two weeks or when cleared by a negative test result or by their physician.

For the protection of both our residents and staff, *all* members of our staff must wear masks throughout the campus, and all caregivers, including housekeeping, are wearing appropriate PPE. Continuous sanitization of all surfaces is an ongoing process.

Q: WHEN IS A PERSON CONSIDERED RECOVERED FROM COVID-19?

According to the CDC, a patient can be considered recovered if they've had at least three days with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, their respiratory symptoms are improving, and at least 14 days have passed since their symptoms began.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR VISITATION POLICY DURING THIS TIME?

A: At Edelweiss Village, both in-apartment and outdoor visits of up to two people are permitted at this time. Visits must be scheduled in advance by contacting the concierge at: 857-547-2000.

At German Centre, per DPH guidance, 30-minute visits of up to two people are permitted outdoors. Visits must be scheduled in advance by emailing: ckelly@germancentre.org or 617-390-3214. Below is the visitation schedule. Options for evening visits are currently under review – stay tuned.

Day	Unit	Times
Tuesday	Anna Bauer	AM: 10:00 & 11:00 PM: 1:30 & 4:00
Wednesday	TCU/Sally Matthews	AM: 10:00 & 11:00 PM: 1:30 & 4:00
Thursday	Schrafft Pavilion	AM: 10:00 & 11:00 PM: 1:30 & 4:00
Saturday	All Units	AM: 11:00 PM: 2:00

Q: ARE ALL RESIDENTS CONFINED TO THEIR APARTMENTS/ROOMS ALL DAY?

A: At Edelweiss Village, a return to communal dining is currently under review. Residents are free to leave their apartments but are cautioned to limit exposure beyond our campus for safety reasons. Small group activities have begun outdoors only, as weather permits. The on-site hair salon has reopened for business.

At German Centre, per DPH guidance, group activities and communal dining are suspended. Residents may amble about the unit on which they reside but may not congregate in groups. Our Music Therapist is actively engaging residents for one-to-one sessions and members of our Activities Department provide programming tailored to individuals' needs. We continue to facilitate FaceTime/Skype visits with family and friends, when requested.

Q: WHY ARE YOU ACCEPTING NEW ADMISSIONS AT THIS TIME?

A: When the virus surged in the Boston area and in our facility, we voluntarily ceased accepting new admissions – both COVID-negative and positive – for the safety and well-being of our residents and staff. Over time, with intensive interventions, the virus was eradicated on our campus. While area hospitals sought placement in local skilled nursing facilities for non-critical test-positive cases, we opted not to expose our residents and staff to those patients. The daily census of patients and residents is critical to the financial health of our organization. When the pandemic lessened and local hospitals resumed non-pandemic operations, we began to admit test-negative short-term patients and long-term residents. Upon arrival on our campus, all patients and residents are placed in a private room for a 14-day quarantine period as a precaution. Staff who interact with quarantined patients must wear a full complement of PPE to avoid exposure.

Q: HOW MANY RESIDENTS AND STAFF ARE CURRENTLY AFFECTED BY COVID-19?

A: This is a reasonable question and, unfortunately, a moving target. To keep the public informed to the best of our ability, each weekday we post a COVID-19 Daily Impact on our website, detailing the current number of positive cases on our campus. We provide a more in-depth report on what is happening on campus related to COVID-19 on a bi-weekly basis. We hope this gives you a clear picture of the current COVID-19 impact at Deutsches Altenheim.

Q: HOW CAN WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE INFORMATION TO HELP EASE OUR CONCERNS?

A: We completely understand and are sympathetic to your feelings of helplessness. You have entrusted us with the well-being of your loved one. We do not take that charge lightly. While the immediate danger appears to have subsided, situations can change quickly. We communicate directly, by phone or email, with affected family members when the situation warrants it and we send regular email updates to the general public. We do not want families to feel disconnected from what is happening here on campus, and we strive for transparency in all of our communications, with a frequency that is manageable. If you would like to opt-in to our email list, [click here](#). The COVID-19 page on our website has the most up-to-date information.