



Living in a COVID-19 World: A Guide for Seniors



Not that long ago the words coronavirus, COVID-19 and social distancing weren't even in our vocabulary and now our lives are centered around them. Although seniors are in a high-risk group, there are still plenty of ways enjoy life...safely.

At Richfield Living, our commitment to resident safety is first and foremost. Adherence to excellent clinical standards remains primary as we strive to protect the lives of seniors residing on our campus. Our goal is to create a safe haven from environmental dangers and potential virus exposure. By strictly following safety protocols and guidelines put forth by the Virginia Department of Health, we have created an environment of safety and transparency, where resident wellness remains the top priority.

Not just physical wellness, we're committed to supporting all pillars of resident wellness including emotional, social and intellectual which are also vital during these challenging times.

In this guide, we'll share some of the tips and practices we've put in place on our campus that you can follow at home. We'll also answer common questions seniors have to help you navigate the COVID-19 world.



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SECTION ONE

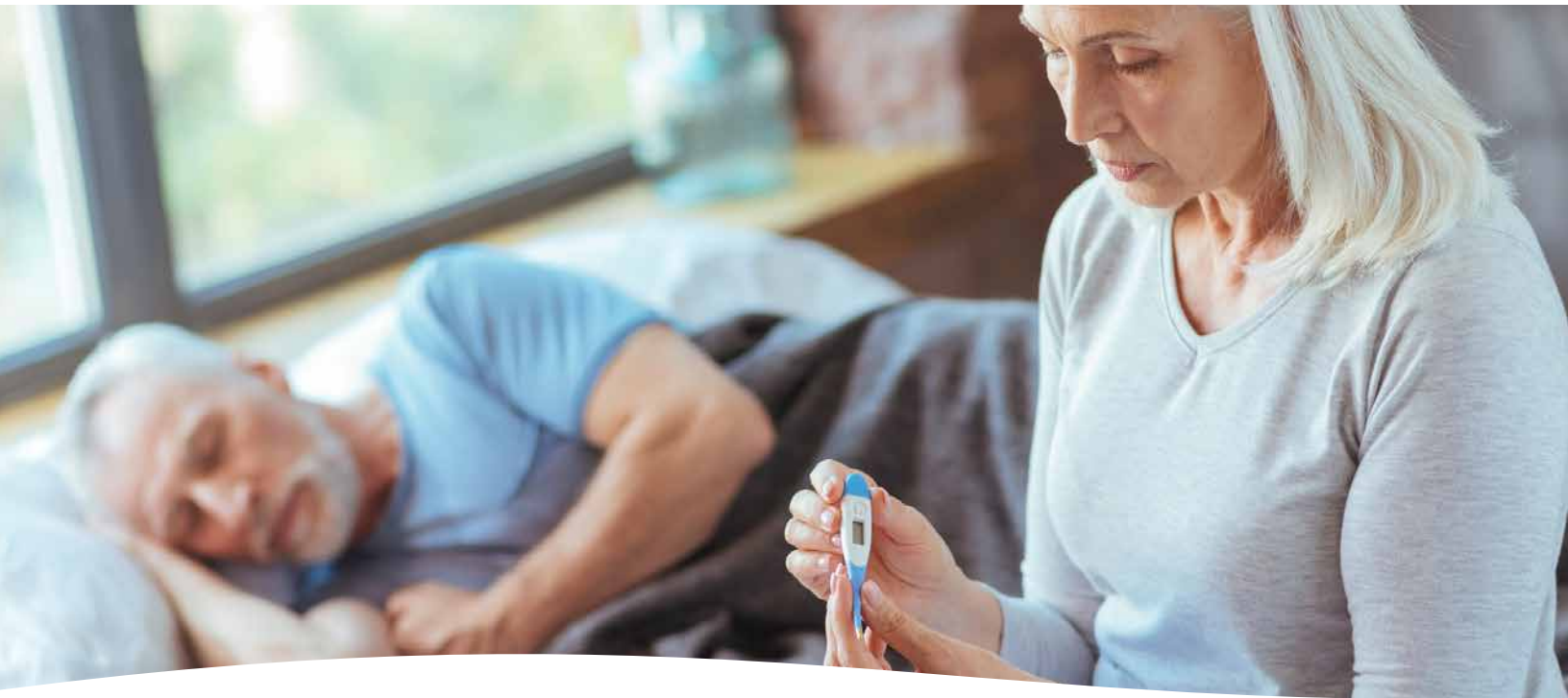
Adjusting to the New Abnormal

Months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is slowly reopening. Most people are getting back out, going back to work, going back to school and trying to create some sense of normalcy. But for seniors, there's no 'normal' in sight. As a high-risk group, seniors are still advised to stay home and isolate where possible, even from loved ones. It's scary and frustrating as many seniors feel they can't continue this way of life indefinitely.

Seniors also still have many questions, here are some of the most common we receive:

Why are seniors at higher risk?

According to the CDC, the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age. In fact, 8 out of 10 COVID-19 deaths reported in the United States have been among adults aged 65 and older. This is because you experience a gradual deterioration of the immune system as you age, making it harder for your body to fight off diseases and infection. Many seniors also have underlying conditions that also hinder the body's ability to cope and recover from illness. Those with health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes need to be especially careful to avoid exposure to COVID-19.





What should you do if you suspect COVID-19? Or may have been exposed?

The CDC recommends seniors get in touch with their healthcare provider within 24 hours of experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and follow their recommendations precisely. If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible. If you or a loved one has emergency symptoms of COVID-19 such as trouble breathing, persistent chest pain, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake and/or bluish lips or face, call 911 immediately.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Should you have to venture out for medical care, make sure to call the healthcare provider or visit their website ahead of time to check:

- Mask requirement for staff and patients
- Cleaning protocols for exam rooms, waiting areas and other common areas
- Social distancing practices for check-in, waiting areas and exam rooms
- Number of people allowed in the clinic at the same time
- Policies on having someone accompany you during the appointment
- Screening and temperature check policies for staff and patients
- Special measures for COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patients
- How personal protective equipment (PPE) is used

Keep in mind that emergency departments have infection prevention plans to protect you from getting COVID-19 so don't hesitate if you need care.

Is it safe for seniors to get care for other medical conditions now?

Seniors still need to take care of their regular health needs. Continue your medications, and do not change your treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider. For chronic disease management as well as preventative and non-emergent visits, seniors are encouraged to use telehealth in addition to communicating with healthcare providers by phone or email where possible. Talk with your healthcare provider to get recommendations on whether or not to reschedule procedure that are not urgent. DO NOT delay care for any health condition that requires immediate attention. If you need emergency care, call 911.

TELEHEALTH HOW-TO

Telehealth is becoming an increasingly popular options during COVID-19 for non-emergent medical issues such as sinus infections, bronchitis, asthma, pink eye, allergies, managing existing conditions like diabetes, examining moles or even treating anxiety or depression.

- **How it works:** You'll have a video visit with a remotely located healthcare provider over a secure connection. You use a website link or an app to connect with them. They'll help you get set up too!
- **Insurance Coverage:** The federal government relaxed restrictions and expanded coverage as well as reimbursement for telehealth services during the pandemic and states have followed suit so more people can take advantage of this option. But make sure to check your specific coverage before making an appointment.





Can my grandchildren visit?

In general, the recommendation is that seniors self-isolate even from family members to protect yourself from COVID-19. In deciding whether or not to take the risk, consider the state of your health as well as the prevalence of the virus in your area as well as that of your family members. Should you decide to take the risk, make sure the visit is outdoors, maintain a distance of six feet of space between you, have everyone wear masks, wash your hands often and avoid commonly touched surfaces as well as shared items. Also keep in mind that even family members with no symptoms could be carrying the virus.

What's my COVID-19 risk from deliveries?

While seniors are encouraged to get necessities delivered rather than go to the store and/or pharmacy, there are still many unknowns about how COVID-19 spreads. According to the CDC, it is thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets, and although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products or packaging. That said, it may still be possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your own mouth, nose or eyes. Although this is not the main way the virus spreads, make sure to wash your hands thoroughly after accepting deliveries or collecting mail.



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SECTION TWO

Tips to Reduce Risks for Seniors

We're all familiar with the CDC guidelines of staying home, wearing masks, washing hands often, getting no closer than six feet if you must be in contact with people and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces regularly. But we also know that there are times when you need (and want) to get out. Here's how you can assess your risk, and tips on how to reduce it as much as possible.

Assessing COVID-19 Risk



LOW RISK

- Staying home (either alone or with household members only)
- Walking outdoors
- Running or biking (alone or with another person)
- Picking up takeout or groceries from stores
- Outdoor dining (with non-household members and social distancing)



LOW TO MEDIUM RISK

- Playing low contact sports outside (tennis or golf)
- Grocery shopping
- Retail shopping



MEDIUM RISK

- Visiting emergency room
- Doctor or dentist visit
- Using ride-sharing service or taxi
- Outdoor restaurant dining
- Museum visit



MEDIUM TO HIGH RISK

- Exercising at a gym
- Hair/nail salon or barbershop visit
- Working in an office
- Dining inside a restaurant or coffee shop



HIGH RISK

- Going to bars and nightclubs
- Attending indoor parties
- Playing contact sports
- Using public transportation (subway or bus)
- Air travel
- Attending a concert
- Going to a movie theater or live theater
- Attending religious services in person
- Attending a sporting event

Risk level for COVID-19 exposure is based on whether it's an enclosed space, the duration of the interaction, the density of people and proximity to potential sneezing, yelling, singing and/or coughing. The assumption is also that not everyone will be practicing all recommended measure to prevent exposure.

Sources: Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel - University of Pennsylvania, Dr. James Phillips - George Washington University, Saskia Popescu - University of Arizona/George Mason University



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Reducing Your Risk

In the Store

If you have to go in-store, check locally to see if they are offering special hours for seniors. Many are dedicating their first hour for seniors to shop with less risk of exposure. Also keep these things in mind:

- Wear your mask
- Bring hand sanitizer with you and use it right after you check out at the store.
- Use marked entry or exit points and follow directional signs or floor markings to keep people at least six feet from others.
- Only touch products that you plan to purchase, if possible.
- Use credit cards instead of cash as they harbor less bacteria.
- Forgo your reusable bags right now and go back to paper or plastic. If you feel you must stick with reusable bags, wash or sanitize them after each use.
- Wipe down at least the handles of your shopping cart using either the disinfecting wipes the store provides or bring your own.

Always strongly consider the prevalence of COVID-19 in your local community before you go out. Cases at the state and county level are updated daily by the CDC [here](#).

When You Gather

- Wear your mask.
- Keep it small; the more people the more risk.
- Make sure you keep six feet of space between you and others.
- Stay outdoors, indoor spaces make it harder to social distance and there's less ventilation.
- Don't stay long; the more time you spend together, the higher the risk
- Consider keeping a list of people in attendance and when the visit occurred to help with contact tracing if someone becomes sick.



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SECTION THREE

Resources for Seniors

Seniors are more tech savvy than ever, but that doesn't mean you're used to taking care of all your essentials online! We're here to point you in the right direction from food to medication to home repair and more so you can stay safe at home.

Grocery Delivery

Many of your local supermarkets offer grocery delivery, simply check their website or call to get more information. In addition, [Instacart](#) is another great option and they even offer same day grocery delivery.

Medication Delivery

Both [CVS](#) and [Walgreens](#) offer home delivery options. Also, check with your insurance to see what home delivery options they may have available for your prescriptions.





Meal Delivery

Fortunately, many local restaurants have added delivery services, simply check their website for details. In the event that they don't, services like [DoorDash](#), [UberEats](#) and [GrubHub](#) offer local restaurant delivery so you can still enjoy your favorite meals. What's more, services like [Blue Apron](#) and [Hello Fresh](#) deliver meal kits that you can easily prepare at home.

Home Services

You never know when a repair or replacement need might come up so it's always good to have trusted resources available. The best references are from friends and family of course. But, sites like [Umbrella](#) are designed for seniors to help match you with professionals for everything from seasonal needs to plumbing, electrical, handyman tasks, household services like cleaning, painting and even tech help!

SAFETY TIPS FOR SHOPPING ONLINE

If you haven't been a big online shopper until now, you may wonder if it's safe to do so. These tips can help you shop with confidence:

- Use familiar and/or trusted websites.
- Before purchasing, make sure the URL starts with HTTPS and look for the locked padlock icon.
- Give as little personal data as possible; no online shopping site needs your birthday or SSN.
- Create strong passwords and change them often.
- Check your bank statements regularly.
- Make sure you have an anti-virus program and regularly update it.
- Avoid entering credit card numbers (or any personal information) on public Wi-Fi networks.

SECTION FOUR

Staying Connected During Social Distancing

As humans we crave connection and being apart at a time when senior isolation is already a growing concern can pose additional health risks. Luckily, technology can help you to stay connected *at a distance*. Here's how:

Video chat with friends and family using Skype and FaceTime and set a goal to talk with one friend or loved one each day.

Engage your competitive side with sites like [Arkadium.com](https://www.arkadium.com) where you can play card and board games with others. There's also Words with Friends which is similar to Scrabble.

Get creative with the [Sketch Club](#) app to draw, paint and share your creations with friends, family or fellow artists.

When you become detached physically or psychologically, or are disconnected from family, friends and community it's known as social isolation. It already affects nearly one in five seniors, and that's before social distancing became the norm. The AARP Foundation calls it a "growing health epidemic" in which the health risks of prolonged isolation are equivalent to the dangers of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. That's why it's so important to continue to make connections during this challenging time.





Become part of an online community through social media, [SENIORSonly.club](#), [SeniorForums.com](#), [Facebook Groups](#), [AARP forums](#) and [Reddit threads](#). You can chat, learn and find a sense of community among people who share your interests.

Stay active in church as most are moving services online. Check your local church for more information. Or, try a [virtual bible study](#).

Try virtual reality with [Facebook Oculus' Horizon](#) where you can explore, play games, build your own world and interact with users from around the globe.

MIND YOUR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

While most of the focus has been on avoiding risk and what to do if you become sick, your mental and emotional wellbeing is just as important during this time. To prevent anxiety, fear and stress from taking a toll on your health you should:

- Take breaks from news stories and social media.
- Help relax by taking deep breaths, stretching or meditating.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Make time to unwind with activities you enjoy.
- Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Call your healthcare provider if these feelings affect your daily activities for several days in a row.

And of course, there's an app for that! [Headspace](#) offers a collection of guided audio meditations for free that are focused on relieving stress and [Calm](#) has a free library of meditations, livestreams and mindfulness tools.

SECTION FIVE

Staying Active While Staying at Home

We mentioned earlier how important it is to continue to support all pillars of wellness – physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, environmental and vocational – during these challenging times. A positive is that we’ve found the pandemic has provided us opportunity to offer residents even more ways to stay active and engaged. So, we’ll be continuing many of them even after the pandemic is over. We hope you feel the same and will use these tips in supporting your wellness at home!

Virtual Field Trips – You can explore the [San Diego Zoo](#), the [Georgia Aquarium](#), [Yellowstone National Park](#), the [Louvre](#) in Paris, the [Great Wall of China](#) – even [Mars](#)!

Virtual Events – Experience live theatre performances through [BroadwayHD](#), favorite musicians performing on [NPR’s Tiny Desk Series](#) or check out your favorite artists’ social media as many are hosting live shows. You can also see live performances from the [Philadelphia Orchestra](#) or opera at some of the world’s most famous venues through [OperaVision](#).

IDEAS IN ACTION

Come Walk with Me, one of our most popular new initiatives, invites independent living residents to schedule a time to walk, talk, share and plan community engagement activities that promote physical, social, emotional and environmental wellness *safely*. We love to keep our residents involved!





Virtual Classes – Learn something new with free Ivy League courses from [Class Central](#). [TakeLessons](#) is another option that can connect you to teachers either locally or anywhere in the world with offerings in over 300 subjects. Not necessarily a class, but you can also learn about business, science, tech and just about anything else with [Ted Talks](#). Or, learn a new language with [Babble](#).

Virtual Fitness – The [YMCA](#) is offering free, on-demand classes. [Planet Fitness](#) is live-streaming workouts each day and you can also find at home exercises with these [senior fitness videos](#).

Virtual Hobbies – Well, the actual hobbies might not be virtual but the classes are! Learn how to knit with [Third Piece's](#) interactive classes, get instructional quilting videos from the [National Quilters Circle](#), take cooking classes through [Top Chef University](#), start gardening with [Good Gardening Videos](#) or embrace your inner artist with studio art class tutorials from the [Museum of Fine Arts Boston](#) is offering studio art class tutorials at home.

IDEAS IN ACTION

Another popular new initiative among residents is our Weekly Dance Card where we encourage residents to “fill their card and life” with suggested daily engagements and activities. Individual options as well as virtual and socially distanced in-person activities are included.

SECTION SIX

Why Seniors Living Communities Are a Safe Choice

It may seem counterintuitive; however there are advantages to being in a senior living community during this time rather than navigating COVID-19 challenges on your own. In fact, in senior living you'll have an entire community of experienced professionals dedicated to the health and safety of residents, patients and associates.

Trained Healthcare Staff -While COVID-19 is new to all of us, the healthcare staff in senior living is experienced with outbreaks such as the flu and Norovirus and already has protocols in place, such as one point of access and screening measures, to reduce your risk. In addition, there's 24-hour staffing to watch for symptoms and provide prompt assistance.

Convenience – You don't have to worry about out of stock food, medications and other necessities in senior living. Not only do we have a dependable supply chain, everything you need is under one roof so you also avoid public touchpoints.





Peace of Mind - Senior living communities are acting with an abundance of caution including following the most up-to-date CDC recommendations for seniors such as stringent cleaning and sanitation protocols, limiting non-essential visitors and social distancing within the community. In addition, communities are communicating regularly with residents and families with information you can trust.

You Won't Be Alone- Although senior living communities are practicing social distancing, doing so in a community setting means that you still have access to a range of engagement and enrichment opportunities as well as ample technology resources to keep connected with loved ones.

INTERESTED IN SENIOR LIVING?

If you believe senior living would be beneficial for yourself or your loved one you can still visit Richfield Living *virtually*. Our communities are offering virtual tours with links to videos, interactive floor plans and room planners. You can also follow the community on social media to get the most up-to-date information. Or, call anytime us anytime at [number]. We'd love to hear from you and answer your questions!

SECTION SEVEN

About Richfield Living

Our non-profit senior living community is located on 50 beautifully landscaped acres in Roanoke County. Near the City of Salem, our location also offers easy access to the services and cultural attractions of Roanoke, Botetourt, Vinton and the New River Valley including Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Radford. Our mission is to help individuals experience life to the fullest through every phase of their journey.

Richfield dates back to 1919 when a group of women saw the need to provide the rural citizens of Roanoke County and the surrounding area with a means of caring for the sick. Our history tells the story of an institution built by ingenuity, dedicated individuals and organizations from the community, and the concerted efforts of two professional nurses – Jane Morgan Harris and Cary Holladay. We stand today as a tribute to their skill, empathy and teamwork in bringing health, courage and peace of mind to those in need.

Richfield offers retirement (independent) living, assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing. In addition, you'll find short-term rehabilitation for residents and non-residents in our Rehab Center and outpatient therapy in our Wellness Center that includes a 2,500-square-foot gym. The Wellness Center also features a salt-water therapy pool, individual wellness coaching, yoga and exercise classes.

Our community also features Davita Dialysis on site as well as our Vacation & Recovery Stay Program, a respite care option designed to provide caregivers time to vacation, deal with personal or business affairs, travel or enjoy needed rest from the stress and strain of round-the-clock caregiving.

To learn more or to schedule a personal tour, call (540) 380-4500.

OUR EXCITING EXPANSION IS UNDERWAY

On our Salem Campus, we're building independent living apartments, villas and a Town Center, along with a new skilled nursing facility offering a household model of care. On our Roanoke Campus, construction has begun on The Health Center with short-term rehab and skilled nursing/ households.



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