**Using Respite Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

We all want to stay safe and healthy! These tips and questions are to help you, as a caregiver, make decisions on using respite care based on your own family caregiving situation

Even with the COVID pandemic, you can still use respite. Respite is healthy for all care partners, whether you give or receive care.

You might wonder “How can I help protect myself and my loved ones from serious illness from the COVID-19 virus?”

Some of the best ways to protect yourself and others include: Keep the air circulating at home; Wash your hands often; Social Distancing in public; Mask Up when in public places; and Get vaccinated. Find local vaccination site at vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov

When choosing an in-home care provider, you can ask them: Are you vaccinated? Can you show us your vaccination card?​ Will you give me proof of vaccination for each respite worker who will provide services to my loved one? ​What's your mask policy?

When choosing an out-of-home service, you can ask them: How many people will be there? Will it be easy or difficult to be socially distant? Are respite workers vaccinated? Will they show their vaccine cards or other proof?

Does the program ask that people attending be vaccinated? Are they following current masking requirements for indoor setting for both care workers and people getting respite care?

There are many socially-distanced activities that respite workers can do with your loved one:

* Go for a walk or bike ride
* ​Read a book aloud or listen together to an audiobook​
* Garden or spend time in nature or at a park​
* Cook or bake​
* Non-contact sports like golf, soccer, badminton
* Video games, virtual card games, virtual board games​
* Watch movies
* ​Exercise or practice yoga
* ​Crafting/Hobbies​

A good care-provider will work with you and your loved one to make sure everyone is safe and secure. If your concerns are not being addressed, talk to the care agency, or find a different one that suits your needs.

Balance the benefits of respites with the risks. You (and your care partner, if able) make the decision! If you, your loved one, or other family members who will be present during respite are: not vaccinated, vaccinated but immunocompromised​, or have compromising health conditions, you may wish to postpone using respite care when the virus is widespread in your community

About the information in this video. Masking and social distancing mandates and recommendations will probably change as the virus surges or recedes in communities in Washington state. The safety suggestions in this video may be more or less restrictive than local, state, or federal mandates or guidelines. Please follow public health safety mandates and guidelines when they are announced. They are based in science and intended to keep you, your family, and our community safe as possible from serious illness and death.

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