

Visitor Restrictions

Frequently asked Questions

Last Updated: July 20, 2020

Visitor restrictions are in place to protect our vulnerable patients and staff and limit the spread of COVID-19. We understand how difficult these restrictions are for patients and families and how important it is to have loved ones present while a patient is in the hospital. With cases of COVID-19 decreasing, we are easing restrictions gradually where it is feasible and safe to do so within public health guidelines.

Why are we easing visitor restrictions now?

Family caregivers play an important role in supporting patient care and mental-wellbeing. Research shows that family/support person presence reduces complications and stress for everyone involved, increases continuity of care, and enhances the patient's overall experience of care. With cases of COVID-19 decreasing, we are easing restrictions gradually where it is feasible and safe to do so within public health guidelines.

Can I hug or kiss my loved one if I am wearing a mask?

No. We understand it's difficult, but for everyone's safety, please do not touch or kiss your loved one. Physical distancing is the single most effective means of reducing transmission of COVID-19 and must be maintained at all times. The bubble principle does not apply in the hospital.

Who decides who the patient's support person will be? Can there be more than one?

The patient, or patient's substitute decision maker, will identify one person who will be the designated family/primary support person. This person may be changed every one to two weeks or in circumstances where they are no longer able to safely visit. (ie they develop symptoms of COVID-19)

When can I visit? How often can I visit? How long can I visit?

Procedures such as scheduling of visits, visiting hours and frequency and duration of visits will vary by site and unit depending on the care team's ability to manage and

implement public health measures. The care team will contact the designated support person to schedule visits and review site or unit-specific protocols.

Are appointments required?

Yes. Care teams will work with the patient's designated support person to schedule visits. Minimizing the total number of family/support persons visiting inpatients at one time will help ensure that physical distancing can be maintained. Please do not enter the hospital unless you have a scheduled visit.

Are children permitted?

No the designated support person must be at least 18 years old. Exceptions may be made for patients nearing end-of-life.

Will visitors be screened?

Yes. The family/support visitor will be screened and will not be allowed to visit if they aren't feeling well, have symptoms associated with COVID-19, are awaiting COVID testing results, have travelled outside Atlantic Canada or have had contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

What else do I need to know before visiting?

Visitors will be required to observe physical distancing of at least two metres, wear a non-medical mask, practice good hand hygiene, go directly to and from the patient's room or other designated visiting area and remain there for the duration of the visit. Visitors are not permitted to sit on the patient's bed, use patient washrooms, share devices, books, or food, or bring cards or gifts.