

novel coronavirus (COVID-19) Staff Guidance

VISITOR RESTRICTIONS DURING PANDEMIC

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has taken steps to restrict visitors to hospitals and congregate living sites (Long Term Care, Supportive Living and Continuing Care), to protect patients and those at greatest risk of severe illness - including seniors.

AHS will continue to evaluate the limitations placed on visitations throughout the pandemic.

The information below is guidance for site managers/unit managers/nursing staff following new visitor restrictions.

Visitors to Long Term Care, Supportive Living or Congregate Living Setting:

- Effective immediately, **only one, single essential visitor** at a time may visit residents in Long-term Care, Supportive Living and Congregate Living Settings.
 - Essential visitors are defined as family, friends or paid companions providing care necessary for the well-being of the resident and visitors attending to a resident who is dying.
- Each essential visitor must be verified and undergo a health screening prior to entering the facility. This may include a temperature check or a questionnaire.
- Facilities will have a greeter to conduct this screening and verify all visitors are designated as essential.
- These restrictions apply to all long-term and supporting sites owned & operated by AHS.
- All visitors are asked to complete a [screening questionnaire](#) to ensure they are well and have not been exposed to respiratory illness prior to entering a facility.
- Visitors must be feeling well on the date/time of visit.
- Visitors will **NOT** be allowed to visit if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - Have an illness that can be transmitted (symptoms including fever, cough, loose stools, rash, or feeling unwell); OR
 - Are immunocompromised; OR
 - Are on self-isolation for COVID-19; OR
 - Are being tested for COVID-19; OR
 - Have tested positive for COVID-19. You will not be allowed to visit until you have recovered and receive clearance from medical officials.
- Children **will be not** be allowed to visit.
 - This restriction is in place, as we know that children do not necessarily show symptoms of COVID-19, and could therefore pose an unknown risk to the health of patients and staff.
 - Exceptions to this restriction need to be reviewed and approved by the unit manager or nursing staff on case-by-case basis.

- In end of life situations when there may be a critical need to visit a loved one, visitors with symptoms will be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and escorted to and from the room.
- No visiting pets allowed.

Visitors to a hospital:

- Effective immediately, AHS will allow only **one visitor at a time**, for duration of stay.
 - We are asking families to coordinate visiting schedules that allows for one person to be at the hospital at a time.
 - The visitor can be an immediate family member or a designated person.
 - Exceptions to this restriction need to be reviewed and approved by the unit manager/charge nurse/nursing staff on case-by-case basis.
- Visitors must be feeling well on the date/time of visit.
- Visitors will **NOT** be allowed to visit if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - They have an illness that can be transmitted (symptoms including fever, cough, loose stools, rash, or feeling unwell); OR
 - Are immunocompromised; OR
 - Are on self-isolation for COVID-19; OR
 - Are being tested for COVID-19; OR
 - Have tested positive for COVID-19. You will not be allowed to visit until you have recovered and receive clearance from medical officials.
- We are asking people going to Emergency, to only bring **one person** with them – an immediate family member or a designate person. Only **one person** will be allowed to escort the patient into hospital, and that person must be well.
- Children **will not be** allowed to visit.
 - This restriction is in place, as we know that children do not necessarily show symptoms of COVID-19, and could therefore pose an unknown risk to the health of patients and staff.
 - Exceptions to this restriction need to be reviewed and approved by the unit manager/nursing staff on case-by-case basis.
- In end of life situations when there may be a critical need to visit a loved one, visitors with symptoms will be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and escorted to and from the room.
- No pets allowed.

Visiting a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19:

- **Visiting is not recommended.** We are advising visitors to please use other methods to be in touch with their loved one, such as a phone call, video calling or use FaceTime.

- **Exceptions:** There are times when it may be very important for visitors to be with a patient. In these instances visitors must meet these requirements:
 - Essential family care providers may be required for the care of pediatric and other patients. The care team will work with the family to ensure safe care and limit potential spread of infection.
 - In end of life situations when there may be a critical need to visit a loved one, visitors with symptoms will be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and escorted to and from the room.
 - These visiting restrictions will continue until the patient is better and the isolation precautions are removed.
- Visitors should not be in shared patient areas (e.g. nutrition centers on the units), and the common areas of the hospital (e.g. cafeteria, gift shop) during and after visiting a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Visitors should not visit any other patients **after** visiting a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Instead, they should plan to visit those patients before they visit a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

During visits:

- **Site leadership/unit managers:** consideration needs to be given regarding designated support persons e.g. doula, paid caregivers, as exceptions to the one person visitor restriction
- Visitors are asked to check in with the site manager/unit manager/nursing staff before entering the patient's room.
- **Based on your unit or site's capacity and processes, please determine the best site-based strategies to check in and keep track of visitors**
 - e.g. visitor sign-in sheet, coloured wrist band, restricting door access to the facility while ensuring this meets building fire code regulations
- Visitors are asked to follow instructions provided by site management/unit manager/nursing staff regarding hand hygiene and the use of masks, gowns and other protective equipment.
- Visitors will be asked to leave during specific medical procedures.
- Visitors are asked to perform hand hygiene when leaving the patient room and when leaving the healthcare facility.