

Visitor Restrictions – Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated as of July 27, 2021)

What is the difference between a caregiver/support person and a visitor?

Caregivers/support people are essential partners in care determined by the patient. They can be a family member, partner, friend or neighbor that play a critical role in providing physical, emotional, and occasionally translation support to our patients.

Visitors are individuals who have a relationship with a patient but are not identified as the patient's caregiver/support person. Their time with the patient is discretionary and usually temporary. They are visiting for purposes that are more social in nature and are not involved in the patient's healthcare.

How will physical distancing be maintained? What if a room has more than one patient in it, and each patient has 2 caregivers/support people or visitors present?

Physical distancing continues to be encouraged as much as possible and if there is more than one patient in the room, caregivers/support people and visitors should try to maintain physical distancing from other patients in the room they are not visiting. Curtains may be drawn between beds to support physical distancing from other patients in the room and to support privacy and patient care.

It is recognized that often family members may be from within the same household, or be contacts of the patient outside the hospital. Risk of COVID-19 transmission is considered low as long as visitors are not eating or drinking and masks are worn at all times.

Do caregiver/support people need to wear masks the whole time they are here?

Yes. The caregiver/support person who visits the patient **must** wear mask throughout the hospital, and while visiting the patient.

When the change to allow up to five people to visit a patient each day (maximum two people at the bedside at a time) is made on August 9, 2021, do they have to be the same five people each day?

The five individuals must be designated by the patient on admission and can be updated every 14 days or at the patient's request.

Caregivers/support people and visitors are still required to sign in on the unit when they arrive, but no sign out process is required.

Are children permitted to visit?

Caregiver/Support People and Visitors should be over the age of 16 years. In exceptional circumstances children under the age of 16 may be allowed to visit as long as accompanied by an adult. This must be arranged in advance with the Manager.

Will spiritual consultants from outside St. Joe's be allowed to visit patients?

Yes, spiritual consultants are considered essential caregivers/support persons and can be designated by the patients as such.

Does a caregiver/support person's or visitor's vaccination status impact any of these guidelines?

While we encourage vaccination for those who are able, vaccination status alone does not impact ability to access the hospital and these guidelines do not vary based on the vaccination status of the caregivers/support people or visitors.

To pass screening, caregivers/support people or visitors cannot be required to be in quarantine after international travel within the last 14 days, and cannot live with someone who is required to be in quarantine after international travel within the last 14 days. How can a caregiver/support person or visitor find out whether they or someone they live with needs to be in quarantine after travel?

Quarantine requirements for international travel are determined by the federal government. To determine whether quarantine is required, caregivers/support people and visitors can visit the government [web page](#) or contact Hamilton Public Health (905-974-9848).

LOCATION / TIME

Where can visiting take place?

For the Charlton Campus, we encourage visiting to take place in the patient's room.

For West 5th, this will be left up to the discretion of the unit manager.

Can visitors move around the hospital OR go outside of the hospital?

We are asking that caregivers/support persons limit their movement through the hospital, as much as possible. The intent is to have go directly to visit the patient, and leave the hospital after the visit.

How long can visitors stay?

This will be determined in partnership with the care team. (Visiting hours are between 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.)

VIRTUAL VISITS/WINDOW VISITS

What about other types of visiting like virtual visits?

We encourage these to continue. We understand that some people do not feel safe coming to the hospital, and virtual visits are good alternatives. This is another good option for those who are not listed as one of the two caregivers/support persons.

EXCEPTIONS / CHANGES

Can exceptions be made? What if the designated days do not work? What if the caregiver/support person needs someone to support them?

As much as possible, we would like units and caregiver/support persons to follow this guideline. This provides a fair and equitable approach across our organization, as well as creating a safe environment by controlling the number of visitors in our hospitals.

We recognize that there will be exceptional circumstances that need to be accommodated, and ask that care teams work with patients and caregivers/support persons closely to ensure the intent of these

guidelines are followed to balance the need to create a safe environment with the importance of having loved ones, family members and care partners connect.

What if a caregiver/support person requires accompaniment?

If you need to bring a support person with you, please let your care team know before your appointment so that they can make arrangements. Support people accompanying patients will need to also be screened be asked to leave if they do not pass screening.

My loved one is having emergency surgery - will I be able to visit?

Yes, for patients who are having urgent, emergent surgery, one family member/caregiver will be able to remain at the hospital until the patient's surgery is complete.

How will I maintain contact with my loved one?

Free Wi-Fi and telephones will be available for patients to communicate with you regularly. We can also offer iPad visits upon request. Ask someone from the care provider team more about those if you are interested.

Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about the visitor policy?

Please speak with the manager of the unit and if you have additional questions, please contact Patient Relations at 905-522-1155 ext. 33838 or by email at PatientRelations@stjoes.ca.