

AHS IPC Recommendations

Visiting Healthcare Facilities during Pandemic

ALL VISITORS

Symptomatic (NEW fever, cough, rash, loose stools, feeling unwell) **individuals should defer visits until symptoms resolve.**

Persons on home-isolation or under investigation for COVID-19 are not to visit others in healthcare facilities.

Persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 are not to attend healthcare facilities as visitors until cleared by medical officials as recovered.

Specific units or sites may restrict visitors further, Site Leadership/Operations are to be involved in outlining visitor-related processes for each site or unit.

Visitor education:

- Before visitors enter patients' rooms, units should provide instruction about hand hygiene, limiting surfaces touched, and use of PPE.
- All visitors should follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette precautions while in the common areas of the facility.
- Encourage visitors to leave the healthcare facility directly after visiting and limit visits to one patient.

Visitors for patients with known or suspected COVID-19.

In general, visitors should be restricted from entering the room of known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

- This includes person under investigation (PUI) as well as anyone returned from international travel within the last 14 days.
- Explore alternate mechanisms for patient and visitor interactions (e.g., video call applications on cell phones or tablets.)

Exceptions may be considered:

- Visitor is essential for patient's medical and emotional well-being and care (e.g., parents, guardians, significant others, family care providers/other caregivers, translators) or
- End-of-life situation or
- Other situations, as applicable, require consultation with IPC.

Any visitors should be scheduled and controlled.

- Limit to 1-2 visitors at one time. IPC will determine based on room size and type and/or any other extenuating circumstances.
- Evaluate the following:
 - any known risk to the health of the visitor and
 - visitor's ability to comply with precautions.
- Screen visitors for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before entering the healthcare facility.
- Visitors are to be instructed to limit their movement within the facility after visit, encourage them to avoid public areas such as cafeterias, gift shops and coffee shops.
- Visitors must stop at the nursing station/desk each time upon arrival, before proceeding to the patient's room, and when leaving.

March 13, 2020

For more information, contact Infection Prevention and Control
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Visitor education

- Before visitors enter patients' rooms, units should provide instruction about hand hygiene, limiting surfaces touched, and use of droplet and contact PPE.
- All visitors should follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette precautions while in the common areas of the facility.
- Maintain a [record/logbook](#) of all visitors who enter patient rooms (may be the same one used for staff).
- Visitors should not be present during aerosol-generating procedures.
- Exposed visitors (e.g., contact with COVID-19 patient prior to admission) should be advised to report any signs and symptoms of acute illness to Public Health/HealthLink.
- No pets are to be allowed.

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