

1. **What is the new visiting policy?** The revised visiting policy is flexible. There are no longer prescribed or restricted hours. Visiting hours will be flexible to the needs of the patient, the family, and the patient's care team.
2. **Why are we changing our policy?** Visits from friends and family are important supports to patients during their hospital stay; they help to reduce anxiety and isolation and to improve healing and recovery.
3. **What exactly is changing?** At times, units at the hospital already practice flexible hours, and allow visitors outside or regular visiting hours because family presence enhances patient care and safety. It will be important to involve the patient and family in the care plan to discuss appropriate visiting hours for that patient.
4. **How many visitors are allowed?** There will not be a set number of visitors per patient, but we must balance the wishes and needs of all patients in the room, and allow the care team to care for the patient. If a room is overcrowded, some family members may be asked to wait in the waiting area. If family visits between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., we ask that they report to the staff on the unit for a temporary form of identification and preferably only one visitor in these time frames.
5. **What about children?** Children under 14 years old are welcome in most areas of the hospital but must be directly supervised by an adult who is not the patient. Units with immunocompromised patients might need to restrict visits by children.
6. **What if the care team needs to provide care?** Family may be asked to wait in the waiting area while the care team provides care.
7. **Will any areas of the hospital be exempt from this policy?** No, visiting hours in all areas of the hospital will be flexible to the needs of the patient, the family, and the patient's care team. Sometimes, units may need to restrict the length of visits or the number of visitors, to be determined in discussion with the patient and family.
8. **What about infection control? Aren't we opening our patients up to an increased possibility of acquiring infections?** Recent research shows no link between flexible visiting hours and increase infection rates. As always, visitors who are feeling unwell, have an infection have symptoms of flu-like or respiratory illness or communicable disease should not visit. Family and visitors should follow all posted hand hygiene and infection control guidelines.
9. **How do we account for people on nights when we have issues such as floods/fires?** If family visits between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., please have them report to the Registration Desk in Emergency Department, who will issue a temporary form of identification. In the event of an emergency, family will be asked to follow instructions from staff. Registration Staff will alert the unit when visitors arrive.
10. **What about visitors in rooms where there are multiple beds?** We must balance the wishes and needs of all patients in the room. Visiting may be interrupted to provide patient care, to protect the privacy rights of other patients or to maintain safety and security decisions. If a room is overcrowded, some family members may be asked to wait in the waiting area.
11. **What about disruptive visitors, or patients whose needs are in conflict with each other?** The condition and care needs of all patients must be considered at all times. Visiting may be interrupted or adjusted to protect the privacy rights of other patients or to maintain safety and security decisions – staff can access Managers, Nursing Coordinator and VP Patient Care Services for intervention at any time.