



## Visitation Policy

PREPARED BY: Nejat Zeyneloglu, MD MBA FHM Chief Medical Officer	PAGE: 1 of 5	EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2023	POLICY NUMBER: WIH-SS-003
REVIEWED BY: Jean Salera-Vieira, DNP, APRN-CNS, FCNS, ACNO, Professional Development	REVIEWED BY:	REVIEWED BY:	APPROVED BY: Kim Francis, PHD, RN, PHCNS-BC, Chief Nursing Officer

- I. Purpose.** The purpose of this *Visitation Policy* (this “Policy”) is to describe visitor guidelines.
- II. Scope.** This policy applies to Women and & Infants Hospital.
- III. Policy.** It is the policy of Women & Infants Hospital that families are welcome to be in the hospital 24 hours a day according to patient preference, but are encouraged to be in the hospital between the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 2 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. – 9 p.m. Each patient can identify one support person who can remain with them overnight and between visiting hours. The care team will work with each patient to design a family presence and visitation plan that meets the needs of each patient and family. The team will also take into consideration each patient’s need for medical treatment, teaching and rest. Also considered is the importance for the safety and security of all patients, family members and support persons.

Visitation privileges are granted without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age physical or mental ability, language, religion, pregnancy, citizenship, marital or prenatal status or veteran’s status.

- IV. Definitions.** Capitalized terms not otherwise defined below but used in this Policy shall have the meanings assigned to them in this Policy.
- (a) **Family** is defined by the patient. Family members are the people who provide the psychological or emotional support for the patient. Family members are not necessarily blood relatives and may include, but not limited to, a spouse, domestic partner (including a same sex domestic partner), family members or friends. Family members are encouraged to be involved and supportive of the patient and are integral to the overall well-being of the patient.
- (b) **Support persons** are the patient’s partners in care. Support persons can help the patient and their health care team by sharing helpful information, participating in care, helping the patient to make decisions, and learning how to manage and support the patient’s care while in the hospital and after discharge. Support persons must be at least 18 years of age. Support persons may stay overnight when appropriate.

- (c) **Visitors** are invited guests of the patient and do not have to be legally related to the patient.

## **V. Responsibility.**

- (a) It is the responsibility of all members of the care team to work with patients and families toward patient-directed family presence and visitation. Family members are encouraged to actively engage in the patient's hospital experience to ensure the delivery of safe care.
- (b) It is the responsibility of family members and support persons to collaborate with the health care team to coordinate their presence as directed by the patient.
- (c) Timing of the family members or support persons presence is at the discretion of the patient in collaboration of the care team.
- (d) Family members and support persons whose behavior is disruptive or infringes on others' rights or safety will be asked to leave.

## **VI. General.**

- (a) We welcome visitors to support the healing and recovery of our patients. We may however, ask visitors to step out should the number of visitors or the timing of the visit impact our ability to provide patient care.
- (b) We are committed to providing a safe environment for our patients, staff and visitors. Should a visitor display disruptive or concerning behavior we will work collaboratively with our security department to ensure the safety of our patients, staff and guests.
- (c) Families are welcomed to be in the hospital between the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 2p.m. and 5:00 p.m. – 9 p.m. An identified support person can remain with the patient between 9:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. to allow patients time to rest and recover.
- (d) Visitors may be asked to step out of patient room areas quickly in response to patient care needs.
- (e) Upon arrival, all family, support persons and visitors must stop at the lobby information desk to check in and receive a badge to be worn and visible (worn above the waist) at all times while in the building.
  - (1) In the event a patient's stay is projected to be greater than four days, long term badges are available for the main support person.
  - (2) Daily badges will expire at the end of each day. Once a badge has expired, the family member or support person will be responsible for checking in with security and obtaining a new one.
- (f) Due to heightened security for our families arriving after 9:00 p.m. and before 9:00 a.m., the Security Department contacts the patient care unit to determine if the patient desires support at that time.
  - (1) Should the patient want visitors, the family and support persons are granted access to the patient care unit and Security contacts the patient care unit to alert them to support persons' arrival.
  - (2) Should the patient wish to not have visitors, this information is shared with the family or visitor, and they are asked to contact the patient in the morning to make a plan.
- (g) While there is no limit on the amount of people a patient can have with them, once a patient receives more than 4 adult visitors; Nurses may speak with patients to reiterate the recommendations and call security to limit visitors based on the patients request.
  - (1) Based on current room size and accommodations; we can have one support person remain with the patient overnight.
  - (2) A maximum of 3 visitors and 1 support person should be in the room at any time. Additional visitors will be asked to wait in the lounge and may switch out to maintain 4 people in the room.

- (h) For families who are welcoming a baby (or babies), the patient designates one support person as a 'banded individual'. This individual is given a white 'baby band' this white 'baby band' affords 24 hour access to the baby (except during certain procedures).
- (i) Minors:
  - (1) In the event the patient is a minor and wishes to have someone other than their legal guardian as their support person, a plan is made with nursing administration, social work, security and /or risk management on an individualized basis.
- (j) Children are welcome to visit adult patients between 10am - 2pm and 5pm - 9pm. They must be accompanied and supervised by a non-patient adult.
  - (1) Children are not allowed in the hallways without any adult supervision.
- (k) These guidelines are intended to be flexible, taking into account the status of the patient, and in collaboration with the care team.

## **VII. Infection Control Provisions.**

- (a) It is a shared responsibility of the healthcare team and the family members to assure that visitors and support persons do not come to the hospital when they are ill.
  - (1) If a visitor, support person, or family member has a fever, flu-like symptoms or other symptoms of infection, or have been exposed to others with known infectious illness (including but not limited to: chicken pox, mumps, rubella, influenza, COVID) they are encouraged to delay coming to the hospital. This information is posted in public areas throughout the hospital.
  - (2) Family members or support persons who are visibly or audibly ill will be asked to leave and may return when they are feeling well.
  - (3) Patients should prepare their family members and visitors ahead of time whenever possible to avoid coming to the hospital when they are ill.
- (b) In the event of a community outbreak of communicable disease, visitation restrictions may occur. These restrictions are communicated appropriately throughout the hospital community.
- (c) In the instance that there is a precaution sign outside the patient's room, family or support persons are instructed to speak with the nurse caring for the patient regarding the appropriated personal protective equipment prior to entering the room.
- (d) Family and support persons are instructed to use hand sanitizer each time before entering the patient room and each time when exiting patient rooms to prevent the transfer of infection.
- (e) Family and support persons are instructed on the use of good cough etiquette while on the hospital campus.
- (f) For the protection of the immunosuppressed (neutropenic) patient, the nurse may advise families and support persons to wear a mask during their visit.

## **VIII. Screening requirements.**

- (a) Screening will be completed at hospital main entrance desk while checking in to visit.
- (b) Visitors with any illness symptoms will be asked not to visit until symptom free.
- (c) Security can reach out to the Nursing Supervisor or Infection Prevention for consultation as needed.

## **IX. Special Circumstances by Location**

ED, ASU, PACU, NICU, LDR

- (a) Family presence may be limited to the patients' chosen support persons.

### **NICU**

- (a) All visitors must be accompanied by at least one banded person.

- (b) All family, parents, and visitors to the NICU must perform hand hygiene via a full scrub or 2 stage scrub (refer to policy: [Hand Hygiene](#)). Hand sanitizer is also used after touching any surfaces and before touching the baby.
- (c) We welcome up to four individuals at the baby's bedside at one time.
- (d) We welcome up to two individuals to stay in the baby's room overnight.
- (e) Only patient-defined sibling children of the infant are permitted to visit in the NICU.
- (f) Patient-defined sibling children under the age of 14 are screened for infection and must have documentation of immunizations prior to entering the NICU.
- (g) In collaboration with the health care team, parents may be encouraged to wait in the Family Area during certain sterile procedures and are encouraged to return to their baby's bedside as soon as the procedure is completed.
- (h) Individuals who are COVID-19 positive or experiencing any symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection will not be allowed to go into the NICU.
- (i) Persons with guardianship or custody rights are allowed to visit.

### **5 West Boarder Nursery**

- (a) Two caretakers can be banded and remain with the infant during the hospitalization.

### **LDR**

- (a) Upon admission, patients are asked to identify two or three support persons in which 1 person is the doula if appropriate, during the labor process. Patients are encouraged to include those persons who will be most supportive to them at time of birth and immediately afterward.
- (b) Once a patient has identified her support people, she should share this information with her providers.
- (c) The identified support persons are responsible for relaying information and updates to friends and family during the labor process.
- (d) In the event of a cesarean delivery, one support person and one (1) doula are permitted into the operating room.

### **Emergency Room**

- (a) Emergency Department patients will support 2 accompanying support persons, and that person's duration of stay in patient areas will be limited.
  - (1) Social Work should be paged if a patient arrives with children in the hospital with no caregiver other than the patient.

### **Ambulatory Surgery**

- (a) One support person is permitted in Ambulatory Surgery. If the patient is admitted, then inpatient visitation rules apply.

### **Ambulatory Services**

- (a) Support persons (SP) are permitted to accompany patients for routine diagnostic imaging, laboratory services, ambulatory office visits.
  - (1) A single support person that is essential for support of a patient who has a mobility issue or a disability, including patients who have altered mental status, communications barriers, intellectual and/ or developmental disabilities will be allowed to accompany patients.

## **X. Patients with Known or Suspected Covid**

- (a) Visitors for patients under quarantine, or those with confirmed or suspected COVID, may have two support people. Support person is provided a mask to wear throughout the hospital.

- (b) Children may visit after 10 days of quarantine for a positive Covid patient.

**REFERENCES:** N/A

**APPROVAL/REVISION:**

07/23/2020: Initial Version of Policy approved by Robert Insoft, MD

07/30/2021: Revision approved

06/01/2023: Revision approved

**REPLACES:** N/A