

COVID-19 Visitor Guidelines for NCH Hospital Affiliates



AVH Visitor Policy Update

Effective on April 13, 2022, AVH is changing our visitor policy to accommodate more visitors. Improving access to visitors is intended to improve patient satisfaction and care. AVH reserves the right to revise the visitor policy if changes in community transmission of COVID-19 affect staff safety or patient care.

Important Information for All Visitors:

- Anyone who is ill is asked to not visit or accompany patients.
- When rotating visitors for a patient, anyone not in the patient room is required to leave the facility.
- If a visitor displays unsafe, threatening or aggressive behavior, or impedes care, intentionally or not, appropriate measures will be taken to protect our patients and staff.

ASA/Doctors' Offices

- Adults – one visitor per patient.
- The visitor must accompany the patient to the exam room.

Outpatient Departments and Surgery

- One adult visitor is allowed per patient.

Emergency Department

- One visitor per adult patient.
- Two visitors per pediatric patient.
- For patients in isolation:
 - One visitor for most isolation patients.
 - One visitor for COVID isolation after patient is confirmed positive.

- No visitor for patients with COVID-19 who are on “continuous” aerosolizing therapies, including BiPAP and Vapotherm.
 - All visitors must leave the room during any aerosolizing procedure.
 - All visitors must strictly follow PPE guidelines and must stay in the patient’s room throughout the visit.
- There may be times when our waiting area or department becomes too crowded to remain safe. When this occurs, visitors may be asked to wait in the department waiting area or their car until the patient gets to their room, or the ER is less crowded.

Adult Inpatient

- All adult hospital inpatients, except those in isolation, may have one visitor at a time.
- During labor and delivery, maternity patients may have two support persons.
- Labor and delivery patients, outside the delivery, may have two visitors.
- For patients in isolation:
 - One **designated** visitor for most isolation patients, including those in COVID-19 isolation.
 - No visitor for patients with COVID-19 who are on “continuous” aerosolizing therapies, including BiPAP and Vapotherm.
 - All visitors must strictly follow personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines and must stay in the patient’s room throughout the visit.
 - All visitors must leave the room during any aerosolizing procedures.
- Hospice or Comfort Measures Only (CMO) patients may have two visitors at a time unless previous arrangements are made with the care team and house coordinator.

Pastoral Care

- Patients may have Pastoral Care visitation to attend to spiritual needs.

Cafeteria and Gift Shop

- Both are open to visitors and any individual(s) who have been screened and enter the Hospital.

Revised 04/12/2022



**Upper Connecticut
Valley Hospital**

UCVH Visitor Guidelines: Moderate Community Transmission

Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital places the highest priority on the health and safety of our patients and staff. Visitor guidelines are continually evolving to protect our patients, caregivers, and employees while balancing the importance of being with friends and family.

These visitor guidelines apply to patients who are seen at UCVH. Guidelines will be reassessed and adjusted based upon the most up-to-date information and recommended best practices for limiting the spread of COVID-19. We appreciate your understanding as we work to keep our patients, their families, and our staff safe as the pandemic continues.

“Visitors” are considered those who seek to access at UCVH and who are not directly involved in the care of patients as outlined here but who wish to socialize with and support a patient. Visitors must be at least 12 years of age. Visitors are not allowed to visit any area in the hospital except the specific location in which they are seeing a patient - they may not access the gift shop, cafeteria, or other lobbies, but may use the UCVH chapel to seek solace and comfort.

Important Note Regarding Exception for Patients with Disabilities

Patients with disabilities such as significant physical disabilities or intellectual or cognitive disabilities may require the presence of a family member, personal care assistant, or similar disability service provider who is knowledgeable about the management of the patient’s care and/or able to assist physically or emotionally during the patient’s hospitalization. This will be permitted and limited to one designated support person. Any restriction outlined below will not apply in this circumstance. The designated support person must comply with the requirements outlined below for all caregivers, all of which are aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19.

Guidelines during Moderate Community spread.

It is important to note that individual departments, sections, or units may have additional constraints or requirements beyond these guidelines, based on the need to maintain patient and staff health and safety. Department-specific constraints or changes to this policy may occur at any time without advanced notice, driven by current patient volume and staffing resources. Patients and caregivers should contact the specific department or unit if there are questions.

- All visitors must be without any COVID-19 symptoms and successfully pass our symptom screening before entering a building. This screening will include a series of

questions and temperature check. Any visitor who has symptoms of COVID-19 will not be permitted in the building.

- Have not had a positive COVID-19 test in the past 10 days.
- Are not on quarantine due to travel or exposure to someone with COVID-19 per NH DHHS current guidelines.
- Visitors can expect to be screened every time they enter UCVH. They will be required to wear a surgical mask which will be provided. Which they may wear over their N95 mask. The mask must adequately cover the nose and mouth at all times while inside the facility.
- This includes wearing the mask in a patient's room.
- Follow staff instructions if you are asked to wear other protection in addition to a face mask.
- If you are not able to wear a mask, you must have a letter from a medical provider stating this. A face shield will be required.

Emergency Department

Patients will be allowed TWO (2) visitors at a time while in the Emergency Department. Visitors will not be allowed for patients who present with COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19. Pediatric patients will be permitted to have two parents/caregivers present; any patient with a disability, as indicated above, will be permitted one visitor/caregiver. Any visitor will be required to pass entry screening and always wear a mask.

There may be times when the waiting area or department becomes too crowded to remain safe. When this occurs, visitors may be asked to wait in their car until the patient is ready for discharge or volume decreases. This will be determined by the manager, nursing staff or provider. It should only be used when the ED has patients in every room and the waiting room or a surge of infectious patients. The ED will contact the screener (ext. 4226) to let them know there are no visitors at this time and will remove the restriction when able. Pediatric patients will still be allowed to have one adult or guardian with them.

Outpatient Appointments- Including Laboratory, Imaging Services, Cardiopulmonary, Rehabilitation Services (PT, OT, ST), Cardiac Rehabilitation, Occupational Health, Ambulatory Nursing Services and Wound Care.

Adult patients who do not require a caregiver, as defined above, should attend their outpatient appointments alone. A parent/guardian will accompany a minor. An exception may be requested for one person to attend an appointment but must accompany patient into the exam room. If maximum seating in waiting room is met visitors and or patients will be asked to wait in vehicle to maintain safe distancing.

Outpatient Procedures

One visitor will be allowed with independent adult patients if requested. For surgical procedures, visitors will be allowed to wait in the designated waiting area if there is no crowding. If maximum seating is met visitors and or patients will be asked to wait in vehicle to maintain safe distancing.

All patients receiving anesthesia will require a responsible adult driver. The driver will deliver the patient at the entrance prior to procedure and will be notified by phone when the patient is ready for discharge. At the time of discharge, instructions may be reviewed with the driver or visitor/caregiver, if requested. For minors and/or patients requiring a caregiver, a caregiver/parent/guardian (only one person) will be screened at entrance doors, will be required to stay in the patient room for the entire surgical visit and must wear an appropriate mask during his/her time in the building.

Adult Inpatients

Inpatients will be allowed up to two (2) visitors at a time. Visitors 12-18 must be accompanied by an adult. Virtual visits are encouraged, and we are happy to assist with them.

Inpatients Receiving End-of-Life Care (e.g., Comfort Measures Only (CMO), at Risk of Imminent Death

Assuming the patient is not COVID-19 positive or under investigation for COVID-19, two (2) family members/friends may visit at a time. The determination that a patient meets these criteria will be made by the provider or charge nurse and is subject to change based on the patient's clinical condition. As with any visitors, they must pass screening and wear a mask while in the building.

Patients who do have COVID-19 may have 2 people at a time and follow staff instructions to wear additional protection in addition to a face mask. We will inform those visitors of the risk of contracting COVID-19 and appropriate quarantine procedures.

WMC Visitation Policy

Purpose:

1. To outline the procedure for general visiting hours
2. To provide restrictions to visitation during hospital declared emergency events, including certain illnesses
3. To inform patients and visitors of visitation rights
4. To provide a support system and shaping a more familiar environment, engendering trust in families, creating a better working relationship between hospital staff and family members.

Scope:

1. Inpatient areas for general visitation
2. Outpatient areas for general visitation
3. Inpatient and outpatient areas for hospital declared emergency events, including certain illnesses
4. This policy does not encompass the physician practices.

Policy:

1. Each patient has the right, subject to his or her consent, to receive any visitors whom he/she designates including but not limited to a spouse, domestic partner, another family member or a friend. The patient has the right to withdraw this consent at any time.
2. Patient visitations shall not be restricted based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. All visitors will be given full and equal visitation privileges consistent with the patient's wishes.

NH RSA 151:21 XVIII NH Patient Bill of Rights / Terminal Illness

The patient shall be entitled to have the patient's parents, if a minor, or spouse, or next of kin, or a personal representative, if an adult, visit the facility, without restriction, if the patient is considered terminally ill by the physician responsible for the patient's care.

Procedure:

General visitation – inpatient areas

1. Each patient and family will be informed of the visitation policy at the time of admission.
2. Each patient is informed of his/her visitation rights including any clinical restriction or limitation of these rights, in advance of receiving patient care whenever possible.
3. Exceptions to the visitation policy may be made by the House Coordinator or Administrator on Call.
4. General visiting hours for the Medical Surgical Unit are from 08:00 to 20:00 Exceptions can be made for specific patients by request to the House Coordinator.
5. Visiting hours for the Intensive Care Unit are not restricted to a time frame, however visitors will be allowed at the discretion of the ICU nurse based on the policy.
6. Only two visitors are allowed at a time. Other visitors will be asked to wait in the Family Room or the Main Lobby.
7. During normal visiting hours, all children under the age of 15 will be accompanied and directly always supervised by an adult while in the facility.
8. Dress Code must include shoes and shirt and appropriate mask.
9. Visitors will be required to answer screening questions and may be asked not to visit if they display symptoms of infectious illness.
10. At the request of the House Coordinator, Communications will announce at 7:30pm "Visiting hours

will be ending at 8:00pm”.

11. At the request of the House Coordinator, at 8:30pm Communications will announce, “Visiting hours are now over. Please leave the hospital promptly and quietly. Thank you and good night”.

12. Visitors who do not leave at 8:30pm will be reminded of the visiting hours by the Nursing staff.

General visitation - outpatient areas

1. Emergency Department

a. Visiting hours for the Emergency Department are not restricted to a time frame; however visitors are normally limited to 2 immediate family members.

b. At the discretion of the ED Physician/RN visitors may be further limited if visitors are felt to interfere with patient care.

c. More than 2 visitors will be allowed only with the permission of the ED Physician or RN.

d. Exceptions to this policy will be made by the ED Physician/RN on a case-by-case basis.

2. Same Day Surgery and Oncology

a. Oncology: a single visitor is allowed to attend provider visit in oncology. During treatment and/or infusion, visitors are asked to wait in the waiting area.

b. Same Day Surgery: visitor will then wait in one of the designated waiting areas while the patient is in surgery. Post-operatively, the visitor may return to see the patient briefly, at the discretion of the surgeon, anesthetist or PACU nurse.

Hospital Declared Emergency Events

1. Based upon a decision of the Hospital Command Center / Incident Command, visitation restrictions may be imposed. These restrictions may be related to a hospital declared emergency event, including certain illnesses. Restricted groups may include:

a. Individuals with Covid or flu-like symptoms should not visit any patients at Weeks Medical Center.

These symptoms include but are not limited to:

i Fever greater than 100.4 F

ii Cough

iii Sore Throat

iv Runny or stuffy nose

v Diarrhea and vomiting

vi Loss of taste or smell

b. WMC will take steps to inform patients and family members of the visitation restrictions.

c. If an individual insists on visiting a patient while experiencing these symptoms they **MUST** use universal precautions (gown, mask, gloves) while in the facility.

d. Children under the age of 18 may not be allowed to visit patients in certain emergency situations.

e. Weeks Medical Center reserves the right to further restrict visitations as needed which may include:

i. Infection Control Issues

i. Interference with the care of other patients

ii. An existing Court Order restricting contact

iii. Disruptive, Threatening or Violent behavior of any kind

iv. Patient or patient's roommate needs rest or privacy

v. A patient undergoing a care intervention. However, any patient who requests that at least one visitor be allowed to remain in the room to provide support and comfort will be allowed.

f. Individuals who do not follow Substance abuse protocols.

g. Visitation shall not interfere with the care of other patients

h. A refusal of an individual's request to be treated as the patient's support person with respect to visitation rights must be documented in the patient's medical record, along with the specific basis for the refusal.

i. When a patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate his or her wishes and no one has presented an advance directive, an individual who asserts that he/she, as the patient's spouse, domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), parent or other family member, friend, or otherwise, is the patient's support person is to be accepted without a demand for supporting documentation

Related Form:

Receipt of Patient Information form #145.

References:

NH Bill of Rights

Owner: General Nursing

Approved by: Senior Staff 10.8.09, 4/7/11, CQI Committee 4/28/14

Accrediting/Lic Body:

Standard/Rule #

Effective Date:

Reviewed: 10/06, 5/08, 9/09, 6/13, 7/19, 5/20, 01/22

Revised: 3/29/07, 10/7/09, 03/15/11, 04/14, 03/15, 4/22