

Visitor Guidelines and Risk Screening for COVID-19

Purpose: *Visitation procedures are designed for the safety of all patients and employees in the interest of limiting exposure to respiratory illness and containment of the COVID-19 virus.*

Procedure: Upon entry to the building, **all** visitors, including vendors, will be screened for respiratory symptoms, exposure to COVID-19, and travel. All visitors and hospital personnel entering the facility, must follow Universal Masking criteria.

Procedural or elective surgery patients (inpatient or outpatient) may have 1 designated adult visitor throughout the duration of the procedure and during the discharge process. If the patient is admitted (or an inpatient) following the procedure, the visitor must leave the campus.

Emergency department patients may have 1 designated adult visitor throughout the outpatient visit and during the discharge process. Once a decision is made to admit the patient, the visitor must leave the campus at the time of the admit decision.

Inpatient visitation is not permitted.

For emergency visits/procedural/elective surgery or when an exception is made for inpatient visitation (see Exceptions to Visitation Guidelines below) visitors must:

- Be at least 10 years of age (inpatient exception only for minors)
- Have no close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- Have no signs or symptoms of lower respiratory illness
- Wear a mask any time in hallways or other common areas of the facility
- Follow social distancing guidelines at all times

Patients Under Investigation (PUI) Visitation Guidelines

PUIs may be roomed in the ED or the inpatient areas with these guidelines applicable regardless of location.

- Visitation is discouraged to limit the risk of exposure to others.
- Alternative communication tools are encouraged for visiting with family and friends (tablets, phones, etc.)

Exceptions to Visitation Guidelines

Exceptions to the restricted visitation guidelines may be made in cases of palliative care, vulnerable patient populations, or other identified ethical circumstances in recognition of the mission of Methodist Healthcare System.

- Visitation restrictions should remain flexible to meet the interests of the family and special need situations such as the following:
 - The patient is at end of life
 - The patient is considered to meet the criteria for a vulnerable population
 - Family presence promotes the patient's well-being and/or care
 - Family is departing for military deployment
 - Laboring mothers or pediatric/NICU patients
- Screeners should call the house supervisor each time for an exception decision. If the House Supervisor is unable to make a clear exception, escalation should move to the AOC. House supervisors should log all exceptions for awareness and future escalations decisions.