



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – NHH COVID-19 Visitor Policy October 2020 Update

Q. 1 How many visitors are admitted patients allowed to have at NHH today?

NHH continues to restrict visiting on inpatient units to a maximum one visitor or essential caregiver to each patient per day. The sole exception would be for patients who are palliative or end-of-life and, in these exceptional circumstances, the number of visitors may be increased at the discretion of the care team.

Q. 2 What is an 'essential' visitor or caregiver'?

Essential visitors are considered: visitors to a patient who is dying or very ill; a support for a delivering mother; a parent/guardian of a child; or, a caregiver deemed essential for an individual with specific needs.

Q. 3. What areas of the hospital are open to in-person visiting?

The following inpatient areas are open to in-person visiting within the restrictions set out in the COVID-19 Visitor Policy:

- all inpatient units on the first floor (Palliative Care, Inpatient Rehabilitation, Restorative Care)
- the majority of the 2A/B Medical Surgical Unit on the second floor; and
- the Maternal/Child Care Unit
- the Emergency Department

Visits are not currently permitted to patients in a hospital 'hot zone' (i.e. to patients presumed or confirmed positive for COVID-19).

Q. 4 What are the visiting hours?

In-person visiting hours are currently limited to 1PM to 5PM, 7 days a week. Effective Monday, October 19th, visiting hours will be extended to 12 hours/day, 8AM to 8PM. There are no visiting hour restrictions for essential caregivers and/or visitors within the Emergency Department.

Q. 5 Are visits permitted to patients receiving care within the Emergency Department?

Yes, one visitor or essential caregiver (16 years of age or older) per patient per day, is permitted for Emergency Department patients, within the restrictions set out in the COVID-19 Visitor Policy. There are no visiting 'hours' within the Emergency Department as there are on inpatient units.

Q. 6 Some hospitals have limited visiting to one designated visitor only. Is this NHH's policy?

Yes, with limited exceptions, one visitor/essential caregiver per admitted inpatient is permitted each day. Exceptions to the number of visitors (i.e. more than one visitor) may be made for patients who are palliative or end-of-life, at the discretion of the care team. It is the responsibility of each patient (or their substitute decision maker) to select who they wish their in-person visitor/essential caregiver to be, and communicate that wish to the rest of their family/social circle in advance of arrival to avoid people having to be turned away at the entrance—if a patient wishes

to have different individuals visit them or support them during the course of their stay, then they should plan in advance the day that each will come in.

Q. 7 Will I need to wear a mask if I visit a patient at NHH?

Yes. Universal masking continues throughout NHH. Those coming into the hospital who have a cloth mask in good, clean condition, are asked to bring it with them and plan to wear it throughout their stay. Those who do not have a cloth mask will be provided with a mask to use and take home with them.

Q. 8 What infection control measures have you put in place to reduce the risk of visitors entering the hospital?

Visitors who fail screening at the entrance to the hospital will not be permitted to visit. Visitors will be expected to wear a mask for the duration of their visit, wash their hands on entry and exit (and repeatedly through their visit, as required) and visitors will be expected to restrict their movement when inside the hospital as much as possible, i.e. to the patient room.

Q. 9 I have a loved one receiving chemotherapy treatments. Can I join them now for their treatment?

NHH continues to restrict outpatient visitors to 'essential only'. Unless your loved one has specific needs to support them during their appointment (for example, requires support getting in/out of the hospital for their appointment) general visiting to patients within our outpatient clinics is not permitted at this time.

Q. 10 What if the patient is unable to identify that they wish to have a visitor?

In situations where the patient is not able to communicate, their substitute decision maker is expected to determine who will visit each day, and communicate this to the care team.

Q. 11 Do I need to have a COVID-19 swab prior to visiting?

No. NHH does not require designated primary family caregivers/visitors to have a COVID-19 swab at this time, but active screening is in place prior to entry. This involves a temperature check and the successful completion of a series of questions regarding symptoms and potential exposure to COVID-19 positive cases. Those who fail the screening will not be permitted to visit and will be referred to the COVID-19 Assessment Clinic (or Emergency Department) for assessment.

Q. 12 What door should I come in/go out if I'm visiting an inpatient?

Visitors to those admitted to an inpatient bed should enter/exit at the main front entrance, between the hours of 8AM and 8PM, to minimize traffic into the Emergency Department and through the hospital. Those arriving outside of these visiting hours will be required to enter via the Emergency Department entrance. All visitors will be asked to sign in on arrival, and to provide their name and contact information to support any necessary contact tracing.

Q. 13 Is the cafeteria open to the public?

Yes, the Main Street Bistro is now open to the public on weekdays. The hours of operation are limited, 8AM to 1:15 PM.

Q. 14 Can I bring food, such as a coffee or tea, in to my loved one?

NHH continues to discourage visitors from bringing food and drink into the hospital at this time to minimize the risk of infection. Food purchased within the hospital, or coffee/tea brought in to enjoy with a patient, should only be consumed in the patient room, following appropriate infection prevention procedures, and not in corridors or common areas.

Q. 15 I live in another province, and cannot visit in person at all. Will the Virtual Visiting service continue to be available?

Yes, the Virtual Visiting program introduced in April 2020 continues to be available. Virtual visits may be scheduled weekdays by contacting the hospital's Virtual Visiting Team at 905-372-6811

ext. 3146 or by email to virtualconnections@nhh.ca. Note: to protect patient privacy, the patient's full name should not be included in the email. For full details, please refer to our website at: <https://nhh.ca/Patients/VisitingGuidelines>

Q. 16 I have a question regarding your Visitor Policy. Who should this be directed to?

Any individual patient and/or visitor with questions or concerns regarding the COVID-19 Visitor Policy is encouraged to contact the manager of the patient care unit during business hours. In the event a visitor-related concern arises outside of business hours, when unit managers are not typically on site, the Clinical Operations Manager has been designated as the point person responsible for addressing questions regarding visiting, in consultation with NHH's Patient Relations Manager or manager/senior manager on call.

Q. 17 Is this COVID-19 Visitor Policy subject to change?

Yes. We are constantly monitoring the total volume of traffic into and out of the hospital to ensure physical distancing requirements can be maintained, as well as any sign of hospital-acquired infection. In the event it is found necessary for safety purposes, the hospital will return to Phase One of its COVID-19 Visitor Policy, limiting once again to essential family caregivers/visitors only and the virtual connection option.

- END -