



**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Visiting Guidelines at NHH – Updated July 11, 2022**

Q. 1 How many visitors are admitted patients (“inpatients”) allowed to have at NHH today?

Effective Monday, July 11, 2022, most COVID-19 visiting restrictions will be lifted. The daily maximum of two visitors or essential caregivers will no longer be in place, and an open visiting policy (no set visiting hours) will return. Visits should not be planned during therapy or treatment times, and the privacy and healing environment of all patients and their families must be respected at all times.

Visiting continues to be on hold for inpatients whose room is located in a COVID-19 hot zone (i.e. a unit designated in a COVID-19 ‘outbreak’ status by Public Health) OR confirmed or presumed positive for COVID-19. There are currently (July 11, 2022) no active COVID-19 outbreaks at NHH.

Q. 2 What are the visiting hours for admitted inpatients?

There are currently no formal visiting hours at NHH. Effective July 11, 2022, visiting hours will once again be flexible to accommodate individual patient circumstances. Please note: all those visiting before 8AM or after 8PM will be required to enter via the Emergency Department entrance. See Q3 below. NHH will monitor visitor volumes and adjust as required should circumstances change in the community or the hospital.

Q. 3 What door should I enter in if I’m visiting? Are there special requirements for late night visiting?

The hospital’s main entrance is locked nightly after 8PM and opened again at 8AM. Visitors to patients admitted to a hospital inpatient bed should note that NHH has special access requirements in place for evening and night hour visits. Visitors to those admitted to an inpatient bed continue to be encouraged to enter/exit at the main front entrance, between the hours of 8AM and 8PM. Visitors to patients within the Emergency Department and adjacent Short Stay Unit should enter via the Emergency Department. All those visiting after 8PM and before 8AM must enter via the Emergency Department entrance as other entrances will be locked.

Q. 4 Are visits permitted to patients receiving care within the Emergency Department?

Yes, consistent with our inpatient visiting guidelines, visitors or essential caregivers are permitted for Emergency Department and Short Stay Unit patients, with the exception of those confirmed or presumed positive for COVID-19. While there are no set visiting ‘hours’ the team asks that families minimize the number of individuals in the patient room at any one time.

Q. 5 Will visitors be screened before entering the hospital or required to show proof of vaccination?

Effective Monday, July 11, visitors to NHH will be expected to self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness. This is a change from active screening, which required visitors to answer a series of questions posed by hospital staff regarding their current health or possible exposure to COVID-19 prior to entering, to passive screening, where visitors are accountable for deciding for themselves if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19. IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING POTENTIALLY CONTAGIOUS SYMPTOMS OF ANY KIND WE ASK, FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR LOVED ONES AND OTHERS, PLEASE POSTPONE YOUR VISIT TO PATIENTS IN THE HOSPITAL. Proof of vaccination is not required but staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is strongly recommended by all who enter.

Q. 6 Do I still need to wear a mask if I visit a patient at NHH?

Yes. While Ontario has lifted mandatory mask mandates in most public settings, hospitals are high-risk settings and, as such, universal masking continues throughout NHH for the time being for all visitors, staff, physicians, students, volunteers and contractors. Those coming into the hospital without a mask will be provided with one to wear during their time on-site. Visitors wearing a personal cloth mask will be asked to either cover it or replace it with a supplied mask and discarded that supplied mask on exit.

Q. 7 If I have been vaccinated, do I still need to be screened/wear a mask?

Yes. Visitors who have been vaccinated for COVID-19 must pass the screening process and will be expected to follow all required infection prevention and control practices within the hospital, including the wearing of any recommended personal protective equipment.

Q. 8 I have a loved one in hospital, and I am worried about what they may be exposed to as a result of this relaxing of visitor restrictions. What infection control measures have you put in place to reduce the risk of visitors entering the hospital?

NHH's universal mask policy remains in effect. Visitors will be expected to wear a hospital-issued mask for the duration of their visit and wash their hands on entry and exit (and repeatedly through their visit, as required). Visitors will also be expected to restrict their movement when inside the hospital as much as possible, i.e. to the patient room and—with the exception of the cafeteria--refrain from eating and drinking outside of designated dining areas. Passive screening is also in place prior to entry. This involves the successful completion of a series of questions regarding symptoms and potential exposure to COVID-19 positive cases.

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

While visiting restrictions have been lifted, NHH continues to recommend outpatient visitors within our outpatient clinics, including chemotherapy and dialysis, be limited to what the patient deems as 'essential,' in consultation with their health care teams.

Q. 10. What about the Obstetrical area? Are there any restrictions on the number of visitors to a new/birthing Mom?

A. Again, as in the case of our outpatient visitor recommendations, we have lifted visiting restrictions but continue to strongly recommend visitors to our Maternal/Child Care unit be 'essential only', meaning birth partner and labour coach. Obstetrical patients are encouraged to discuss visiting with their care team if they wish to have more.

Q. 11 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. 12 Is the cafeteria open to the public?

Yes, the Main Street Bistro is open weekdays, 8AM to 2PM, and public service is available. For the Bistro's latest hours of operation please see the hospital website.

Q. 13 Can I bring food, such as a coffee or tea, in to my loved one?

Yes, with the care team's approval, but please note: To minimize the risk of infection introduced when communally consuming food/drink in patient care areas, no eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms at this time.

Q. 14 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 in limited form. Virtual visits may be scheduled weekdays, as internal capacity permits, 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. 15 I have a question or concern regarding your Visiting Guidelines. Who should this be directed to?

Any individual patient and/or visitor with questions or concerns regarding NHH's evolving Visiting Guidelines 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 the manager/senior manager on call.

Q. 16 Are these latest Visiting Guideline changes subject to change?

Yes. Our team is constantly monitoring the total volume of traffic into and out of the hospital to ensure safety can be maintained, as well as any sign of hospital-acquired infection connected to visiting. In the event it is found necessary for safety purposes, the hospital will limit visiting once again. It has always been our goal to maintain a safe balance between limited visiting/essential caregiver presence and infection control and ultimately return to the open visitor policy in place prior to the pandemic.

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