



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Changes to visiting guidelines at NHH – Most COVID-19 visitor restrictions now lifted, universal masking policy remains in place

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, July 11th, 2022—Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is making changes to its COVID-19 Visiting Guidelines. Effective Monday, July 11th, 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.

The move follows consultation with NHH Patient and Family Advisors, front-line staff, physicians and infection prevention and control leaders and informed by the province's removal of all public health Directives related to COVID-19.

Effective Monday, July 11th, 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 will be accountable for deciding for themselves if they are ill or at risk of a potential exposure. If you are experiencing symptoms of any kind we ask, for the safety of your loved ones and others, please postpone your visit to patients in the hospital.

Instructions will be available at all three entrances (Main Entrance, Dialysis and Emergency Department) and volunteers will be available at times of peak visiting to help visitors and patients understand the new process and answer questions.

Universal masking policy remains in place

As a high-risk setting, NHH's universal masking policy remains in place throughout the hospital and Community Mental Health offices. Visitors will continue to have access to free masks on entry to the hospital and NHH's Community Mental Health offices and will be asked to keep their medical-grade mask on at all times (or over top of their personal cloth mask) while inside, unless eating or drinking in designated areas. No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms.

No in-person visiting on inpatient units on outbreak

Visiting will continue 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. As of today (July 8th, 2022) there are no

active COVID-19 outbreaks at NHH. Alerts regarding any new COVID-19 outbreaks at NHH will be shared publicly as appropriate through NHH's communication channels.

"We appreciate the challenge that the pandemic has caused for patients, visitors and the entire community over these past two years," said Susan Walsh, President and CEO.

"We are extremely grateful for the patience, cooperation and flexibility shown through the many changes we have had to implement to manage risk. With all provincial public health directives now lifted regarding COVID-19, and temporary pandemic funding to support designated screeners within hospitals now concluded, most COVID-19 visitor restrictions will be lifted, with the exception of universal masking. We will be monitoring the situation closely and should local or in-hospital circumstances change, we will revisit our decision and revise accordingly. Without a doubt, we recognize the important role visitors play in health and healing. At the same time, we are also mindful of the fact that COVID-19 is still circulating in the community. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of everyone's continued diligence with regard to masking and self-screening to minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19 within the facility. Thank you for your understanding and support."

For further details on Visiting Guidelines, including information on virtual visiting, which will continue in limited form, please see the Visiting page of our website.

Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 700 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp). Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, at 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

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