



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Visitor Policy update – Restrictions to ease again for inpatients outside of outbreak areas, beginning Tuesday, February 22, 2022

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, February 22, 2022 – With key public health and health system indicators continuing to improve, an update to Northumberland Hills Hospital's COVID-19 Visitor Policy is being implemented following consultation with staff, physicians, infection prevention specialists and members of the hospital's Patient and Family Advisory Council.

Effective today (Tuesday, February 22), in-person visiting hours at NHH will return to 12 hours/day (8AM to 8PM) on all eligible inpatient units, similar to the practice introduced in the fall of 2020 and again in the summer of 2021.

The maximum daily number of visitors/essential caregivers will again be limited to one person per patient per day. Exceptions to the one-person and 8AM to 8PM rule will continue as follows:

- For inpatients at imminent end of life additional visitors will be considered at the discretion of the care team
- For obstetrical patients, birth partner AND labour coach will be permitted
- For outpatients, the following exceptions are permitted:
 - essential caregivers for children coming to the hospital for care (children = 18 and under)
 - essential caregivers for those with communication challenges and/or cognitive impairments - outpatient settings only (Emergency Department visits, Diagnostic Imaging, etc.)

All visitors/essential caregivers will continue to be required to sign in and document their contact information for purposes of contact tracing. All visitors/essential caregivers must pass the screening process and will be expected to follow all required infection prevention and control practices for the duration of their stay within the hospital.

Rapid Antigen Tests to be piloted with those visiting admitted inpatients as an added precaution

As an additional protection for vulnerable inpatients, NHH will also be piloting the use of Rapid Antigen Tests for those visiting admitted inpatients as part of the screening process. The Rapid Antigen Test will be supplied to applicable visitors and administered on site prior to entry. Visitors/essential caregivers who receive a positive result on their Rapid Antigen Test will not be permitted to visit and will instead be redirected to the NHH COVID-19 Clinical Assessment

Centre for support, testing and assessment as appropriate. The use of Rapid Antigen Testing is not expected to be permanent. NHH will monitor the volume of asymptomatic positive patients picked up through the proactive surveillance, together with data on the spread of COVID-19 within the hospital and community, and adjust the process as required.

As in the past, inpatients/substitute decision makers will be responsible for selecting who they wish their visitor/essential caregiver to be, and to communicate that wish to the rest of their family/social circle in advance of any visit to avoid people having to be turned away at the entrance. Inpatients or substitute decision makers for inpatients who wish to have different individuals visit on different days are asked to communicate this to their loved ones in advance.

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 (February 22) there are two COVID-19 outbreaks at NHH, both located in the Post-Acute Specialty Services area: Inpatient Rehabilitation and Restorative Care. Updates on the status of COVID-19 at NHH are provided via our website each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Click the following for a direct link to monitor updates: <https://nhh.ca/covid-19>

Virtual visiting option continues

Virtual visiting appointments continue to be a good alternative to consider if you are unable to enter the hospital at this time to see a loved one. Virtual visiting is available Monday through Friday. Virtual visits may be requested by either patients or by their family members or friends. Phone appointments are also available on request.

Those interested in requesting a Virtual Visiting appointment with an individual admitted to NHH can contact the hospital's Virtual visiting Team at 905-372-6811 ext. 3146 or send an email to virtualconnections@nhh.ca and include their preferred contact information, as well as the unit, room number and initials of the patient they would like to connect with (note: to protect patient privacy, the patient's full name should not be included in the email).

For further information on visiting at NHH, including our related COVID-19 Visitor Policy and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, as well as details on Virtual visiting, see our website at www.nhh.ca/Patients/VisitingGuidelines

For the latest information on COVID-19, including links to related resources, please see the COVID section on the hospital's website, nhh.ca/covid-19

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

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 and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 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. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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