



Policy and Guidelines for Visiting of Patients

POLICY: Visiting guidelines are established to provide patients the opportunity to designate and receive visitors of their choice and to provide an environment that maintains the safety/security of patients, visitors, and the hospital, prevents the transmission of community acquired infections, and provides a restful healing environment.

PURPOSE: To define patient visitation guidelines throughout St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

GUIDELINES: St. Elizabeth Healthcare allows flexible visitation in general inpatient areas throughout a 24 hour period with minimal restrictions which have deemed to be clinically necessary. Visitation in outpatient areas is in accordance with this policy. Any clinically necessary restrictions are defined by each individual outpatient department based on the services being provided and the needs of the patient.

Patients are provided the opportunity to communicate requested hours of visitation to promote rest and socialization. Patients have the right to withdraw or deny consent to receive visitors at any time. St. Elizabeth does not restrict, limit, or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

CLINICALLY NECESSARY RESTRICTIONS:

1. Visiting Hours in the Behavioral Health Units:

Visiting Hours in the Behavioral Health Units are limited in order to allow maximum participation in therapies throughout the day without interruption.

Adult Behavioral Health Units: (Florence and Edgewood)

Monday through Friday: 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Weekends and Holidays: 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Geriatric Behavioral Health Units:

Monday through Friday: 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Weekends and Holidays: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Note:

Patients in the seclusion room may have visitors at the discretion of an R.N. Requests for patient visitation outside established visiting hours need to be arranged with the treatment team. Visitors are limited to two at a time. Children under 14 are not permitted to visit.

2. Visiting in the Family Birth Place:

The Family Birth Place embraces the role of support persons as an integral part of each patient's birthing experience.

- A. When possible the patient's support person(s) will be present for admission and orientation to the Family Birth Place and be included in the teaching, and discharge planning processes.
- B. The patient, her attending physician, and the nurse determine the number of visitors during the labor, delivery and recovery phases, but should not exceed five persons.
- C. One visitor at a time is allowed in the triage/assessment room.
- D. Attendance at a cesarean delivery is limited **to** one support person of the patient's choice. The attending physician and/or anesthesia will determine whether the presence of the support person is appropriate based on the patient's condition.
- E. Children must be 14 years or older to visit unless they are siblings of the infant. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult other than the patient at all times.
- F. Parents should not bring children with signs of illness, infection, or exposure to a communicable disease onto the unit. Visitors may be visibly screened by nursing personnel when they arrive on the unit for infectious diseases (e.g., fever blisters, cough, rash etc.). During flu season sibling visiting may be restricted or required proof of flu vaccine immunization at least 2 weeks prior to visit, based on recommendations from the Infection Control Department, Centers for Disease Control, and the Greater Cincinnati Health Council.
- G. All visitors will wash their hands prior to handling infants.

3. Visiting in the Emergency Department:

Due to the acute needs of Emergency Department patients and environmental limitations, visitation is limited to two visitors per patient in the treatment area. Additionally, during triage a designated support person may accompany the patient upon their request. A designated support person may also escort the patient to the treatment area. After the patient's initial assessment, a second visitor is welcomed to visit the patient in the treatment area.

4. Visiting by Children:

- A. Children under 14 years of age should not routinely visit.
- B. For safety reasons, visitation by children is prohibited when a patient is in isolation precautions. In the event of extenuating circumstances, consult with Infection Control.
- C. Children are not permitted to stay overnight.
- D. Children must be in the accompaniment of an adult caregiver at all times. Children may not be left in the care of a patient under any circumstances.

LIMITATIONS:

1. Visiting privileges may be limited at any time based on the patient's condition or request.
2. Prisoner patients-in-custody are not authorized visitors unless specifically approved by the attending police (or jail) authority.
3. In the event of a disaster/epidemic, or at the direction of the local or state health department, visiting privileges may be rescinded for the protection of patients, visitors and staff.
4. Special rules shall govern the visitors of isolation patients (refer to Infection Control plan available on the intranet).
5. For the protection of patients, the following restrictions are in effect at all St. Elizabeth Healthcare facilities:
 - a. When family members and visitors have symptoms of cold, cough, flu, runny nose, sore throat, cold sores, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, rash or skin infection;
 - b. When the patient is undergoing therapy or interventions that would interfere with the plan of care;
 - c. When a visitor exhibits disruptive behavior that presents a direct threat to staff or other patients;
 - d. When a patient or roommate needs privacy or is receiving care;
 - e. When there is a court order limiting or restraining contact;
 - f. When substance abuse treatment protocols require restricted visitation in the plan of care.
 - g. When the environment limits the physical space available to comfortably accommodate visitors.

St. Elizabeth Healthcare reserves the right to determine any other situations where it is necessary to limit visitation.