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## **Essential Visits During COVID-19 Recovery**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is the definition of an essential visitor?**

A patient may identify a family or support person, someone who is integral to the patient's life and healing, and may be involved in care to the extent the patient desires in collaboration with the care team.

#### **What is the process to document essential visitor information?**

The admitting care team will help the patient identify a family or support person. Once the person is identified the information is documented in CST Cerner Admission History Adult powerform.

#### **Why can patients only have 1 Essential Visitor?**

We ask that patients only identifying one (1) Essential Visitor to ensure the units can safely accommodate visits on their unit. We understand that being in a hospital setting can be isolating and frightening and that some patients may want to have multiple visitors, however at this time we are only able to accommodate 1 Essential Visitor per patient per visit. Some patients may require more than one Essential Visitor. These requests will be handled on a case by case basis in collaboration with the care team.

#### **How long can an Essential Visitor visit a patient for?**

An Essential Visitor is welcome to visit their patient for a maximum of 2 hours per day. This will provide the unit staff the ability to safely accommodate all visits in their space. In some cases, Essential Visitors help with the care of the patient, such as feeding, and are required to visit multiple times per day. If the family member needs to come back several times a day, a conversation should occur between the patient, Essential Visitor, and care team to determine how to best accommodate this request.

#### **What do Essential Visitors need to know before visiting the hospital?**

They will be screened when they first arrive at the hospital for every visit. They should show their identification wrist band to the front door Screener to identify themselves as an Essential Visitor.

At the entrance of the hospital the essential visitor must complete a screening and:



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- Follow hand hygiene by using hand sanitizer.
- Change their mask to a medical grade mask provided at the entrance.
- Tell the screener where they will visit in the hospital.
- Practice safe social distance by keeping 2 meters apart from other people.
- Travel directly to the patient area.

### **What do Essential Visitors need to know before visiting the unit?**

- Upon arrival at the unit, they must sign in at the Nursing Station with the Unit Coordinator or Registration Clerk. The Unit Coordinator or Registration Clerk will do a formal COVID-19 screening. If the Unit Coordinator has any question about the Essential Visitor they will contact the most responsible clinician on the unit.
- Essential Visitors will be provided a medical grade mask at the entrance of the hospital, and should perform Hand Hygiene before entering and exiting the unit and the hospital.
- Essential Visitors should stay at the bedside area.
- Essential Visitors should try to maintain appropriate physical distancing (2 metres) from other patients or other family members.
- At the end of their visit, Essential Visitors must sign out with the Unit Coordinator or Registration Clerk. This is to ensure best practices for contact tracing should a COVID-19 exposure occur.

### **Why do Essential Visitors need to wear an identification wrist band?**

Essential Visitors will be provided an identification wrist band upon their first visit. This wrist band will help the screeners and unit staff better identify the Essential Visitor and provide a smoother entry process to the hospital.

### **What happens if an EV loses or removes their identification wrist band?**

If an Essential Visitor loses their identification wrist band, they may ask the unit to provide them with a new one.

### **Can Essential Visitors visit if they're not feeling well?**

No. If Essential Visitors have cold or flu-like symptoms, or have been near someone who is sick, they should not visit. Essential Visitors will be screened upon entry to the hospital for any signs and symptoms of communicable diseases that pose a risk of transmission. If an Essential Visitor shows signs and symptoms they will be asked to leave, postpone or reschedule their visit until they no longer have any symptoms.



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**Can a patient change their identified Essential Visitor?**

Each Essential Visitor request is assessed on a case by case basis. An Essential Visitor is considered family as identified by the patient and as such can have their visitation privilege revoked by the patient or Substitute Decision Maker. We ask that patients do not frequently change their Essential Visitor in an effort to see as many people as possible as this increases the risk of exposure and transmission of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19.