

Patient information

Hospital visiting during the COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) we have suspended hospital visiting until further notice. The only exceptional circumstances where **one visitor** (a family member or friend) will be permitted to visit are listed below:

- The patient you wish to visit is close to the end of their life.
- You are the birthing partner accompanying a woman in labour.
- You are a parent or appropriate adult visiting your child.
- You are supporting someone who has cognitive or communication difficulties, a mental health issue, a learning disability, autism, or dementia, where not being present would cause the patient to be distressed.

Please contact the ward or department in advance to discuss arrangements to visit.

Anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste) **should not** visit, even if these symptoms are mild or intermittent, due to the risk they pose to others. All visitors must observe good hand hygiene (handwashing) to reduce risks to the visitor, other patients and staff and wear a facemask at all times.

What to expect if you are permitted to visit an inpatient during the COVID-19 pandemic

- All visits will need to be arranged in advance. Prior to visiting, a member of staff will ask you about any high risk conditions you or members of your household may have. Depending on your answers, you may be advised not to visit.
- A member of staff will talk to you about what to expect on your arrival at the hospital and on the ward. It is important to remember that your relative may look very different to when you last saw them and may not be able to respond to your presence.
- If a visit is agreed, you will be given instructions on where to go and who to ask for on your arrival at the hospital. If you are unable to visit in person please talk to the staff about arranging a virtual video visit.
- Where it is possible to maintain social distancing throughout the visit, a second additional visitor could be permitted if your loved one is at the end of life – this must be discussed in advance with the ward staff.
- You should drive, or be driven, to the hospital by a member of your household if possible to minimise the risk of exposure to others. Our car parks are currently free for patients and visitors. You should avoid the use of public transport, especially after the visit.

- Please bring as few personal belongings as possible. Bags, handbags and electronic devices will not be permitted to minimise the risk of infection.
- We practice social distancing where possible in the hospital and you will be asked to adhere to this during your visit.
- When entering the hospital you must clean your hands using the sanitiser provided and put on a facemask. The facemask must cover your nose and mouth, you should not touch or remove this whilst you are in the hospital. You must wear any additional personal protective equipment as directed by staff during the visit, e.g. gloves and gown.
- You will need to remove any outer clothing, e.g. coat/jacket, roll up your sleeves and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds on arrival at the clinical area. You should avoid touching your face, eyes and nose.
- Our staff will advise you on how long you will be able to stay with your loved one. When you are with your loved one you can use the call bell or talk to a member of staff if you need any assistance or when you are ready to leave.
- Please follow all instructions given by our staff carefully, they will guide you to remove and dispose of all the personal protective equipment appropriately. If the person you are visiting has coronavirus, you will be at an increased risk of infection during the visit.
- You do not need to self-isolate after the visit as your risk from virus transmission will have been minimised by wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment and hand washing. However, should you or someone you live with, develop symptoms of coronavirus you must self-isolate in line with Government guidance.
- When you arrive home we advise that you remove and wash your clothing and take a shower or bath.
- If you have any questions following your visit you can talk to staff on the ward or ask staff on the ward to arrange for you to talk to the Carers Lead, or staff in the Palliative Care Team, Chaplaincy Team or Bereavement Office.

The Trust will do all it can to protect you and your loved ones but cannot guarantee that you will not develop COVID-19 if you visit one of our hospitals.

References:

NHS England and Improvement: Clinical guide for supporting compassionate visiting arrangements for those receiving care at the end of life – 13 May 2020

NHS England and Improvement: Visitor guidance – 8 April 2020

NHS England and Improvement: Visiting healthcare inpatient settings during the Covid-19 pandemic – 5 June 2020

For further information visit www.gov.uk

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