

Visiting Geisinger patients (as of Nov. 2, 2020)

To our visitors:

It's important to keep your loved ones safe while they're in the hospital. That's why we're taking steps to protect our patients, team members and the community from COVID-19 through new visitation policies. Starting Monday, Nov. 2, we're temporarily restricting routine, in-person visits to our hospitalized patients. When you can, visit through phone calls, Facetime, Skype and other means.

Our current visitation policy:

- As of Nov. 2, visitation (other than for special situations as noted below) has been suspended until further notice.
- Clergy and doulas are part of the care team and not considered visitors.

Visitation for special situations (visiting hours can be flexible):

- Patients who are medically unstable (two designated visitors)
 - All patients who are imminently dying (within hours to days), but who are not COVID-positive or persons under investigation (PUIs) (two visitors)
 - A one-time "substitution" with two other visitors is permitted.
 - Visits should ideally be between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.
 - Patients undergoing surgery or procedures (one single-time visitor immediately after the procedure)
 - Delivering mothers (one support person)
 - Patients who are minors and those with limited decisional capacity (up to two parents or guardians)
 - Patients who have altered mental status, an intellectual, developmental or cognitive disability or a communication barrier (two visitors)
 - Patients with disruptive behavior where a family member is key to their care (two visitors)
 - Patients being discharged (one visitor to help with discharge planning)
 - ER patients (no visitors, with some exceptions as noted):
 - Patients who are medically unstable (one visitor, at provider's discretion)
 - Patients who are at end of life (two visitors)
 - Patients who are minors and those with limited decisional capacity (up to two parents or guardians)
 - Patients who have altered mental status or developmental delays and caregiver provides safety (one visitor)
 - Patients with disruptive behavior, where a family member is key to their care (one visitor)
 - Alerted patients (e.g., STEMI, stroke, trauma) (one visitor)
- Visitors may not stay in the ER waiting room, but are asked to wait in their vehicle and/or provide a contact number where staff can reach them.

Approved visitors must:

- Be 18 years of age or older and in good health
- Bring a form of identification
- Not have symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, recent loss of taste or smell or flu-like illness suggestive of COVID-19, and complete a health screening, including a temperature check, at the entrance before entry
- Not have active COVID-19 infection
- Be at least 10 days from onset of illness if they previously had COVID-19 infection
- Wear a Level 1 mask or their own close-fitting cloth masks at all times (gaiters are acceptable, but bandannas and other loose cloths are not) and cover tracheostomies (e.g., with cloth, gauze or a second mask)
 - Masking for visitors is mandatory at all times in all Geisinger buildings. Any visitor who doesn't comply may lose future visitation privileges.

continued

- Respect social distancing guidelines of 6 feet from all others
- Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before entering and after leaving a patient's room.
- Use the same entrance for entry into and exit from the hospital.
- Identify themselves and stay in designated areas (not travel throughout the facility)

COVID-19-unit patient visitation criteria

COVID-positive or suspected (PUI) **end-of-life** patients (medically unstable or imminently dying) may have:

- Two designated, unchanging visitors who may not switch out with other people
- One-time visit from families (but allowed a second visit if death is imminent)

PPE requirements for visitors to COVID-19 patients:

- KN95 mask (preferred) or N95 mask
- Isolation gown
- Eye protection
- Gloves

Process

- Approval for two designated visitors for end-of-life patient is requested from physician and/or nursing staff.
- Screeners will be notified of the names of the two designated visitors.
 - o Visitors will be notified that any entry into a COVID-positive area will be at their own risk.
 - o Education of risks will be provided
 - o Visitors must bring a form of identification.
 - o Documentation in the form of a brief note will be placed into the patient's chart to reflect that education was provided and that the two designated visitors have accepted these risks.

- **Proposed language for note:**

The patient has requested in-person visits from [] and [] and the hospital has agreed to permit those visitors in accordance with its policies. Hospital staff have communicated with the proposed visitors and explained that an in-person visit has inherent risks, especially for older adults and people with a weakened immune system. The risks explained to the proposed visitors include acquiring and transmitting COVID-19. The hospital has protocols in place to limit spread of COVID-19, but the risk of transmission cannot be eliminated, and an in-person visit increases those risks. The proposed visitors acknowledged that they understand the increased risks and have accepted them. They must also comply with the hospital's protocols for managing visitors and mitigating risks as a condition of the in-person visit. (.COVIDVISITATION is the phrase that can be pulled into an Epic note.)

- A time will be established for the visit and coordinated with security or an alternate designee to walk the visitors from the front entrance to the patient's room (campus-specific).
- The two designated visitors must pass the screening process before entering the hospital.
- Once in the visitation unit, the site manager will assist visitors with donning and doffing of PPE.
- The visitors are permitted to stay for up to 1 hour if patient is medically unstable (condition expected to worsen), but if death is imminent (expected within 24 hours), visitors may stay longer. During this time, they cannot exit the room for any reason. If they need to exit, they will be escorted out of the facility to prevent potential spread of the virus.
- If the visitors need to use the bathroom facilities, they may use the bathroom in the patient's room (if one is available).
- The visitors will then be escorted to the entrance by a security team member or alternate designate to exit the hospital (campus-specific).

Geisinger operative and procedural visitor specifications

- All visitors must have a mobile phone with them during the visit and provide the phone number at registration.
- All visitors are required to wear a Level 1 mask or their own close-fitting cloth mask (gaiters are acceptable, but bandannas/loose cloths are not) and cover tracheostomies (e.g., with cloth, gauze or a second mask).

Reminder: Technology-based solutions such as iPads can be used to supplement.

Other visitation scenarios

Inpatient procedures:

- One visitor may accompany the patient to registration and the waiting area.
- Patients and visitors must mask and respect social distancing while in the facility.
- One visitor may wait in the facility waiting area. This opportunity will vary daily based on the number of visitors and capacity of the facility to accommodate social distancing. At the discretion of each facility, visitors may be asked to wait outside.
- Patients may have a single one-time visitor after a procedure.
- Visitors will be called after completion of the patient’s procedure and given directions to the patient’s location. Visitors who leave the facility after the patient is transported to the procedural holding area will be called at the conclusion of the procedure and provided with a report on the patient’s progress and inpatient location.

Ambulatory procedures:

- One visitor may accompany the patient to registration and the waiting area.
- Patients and visitors must mask and respect social distancing while in the facility.
- One visitor may wait in the facility waiting area. This opportunity will vary daily based on the number of visitors and capacity of the facility to accommodate social distancing. At the discretion of each facility, visitors may be asked to wait outside.
- Visitors will be called after completion of the patient’s procedure and instructed when to reenter the facility and escort the patient from the facility at discharge.

Outpatient and diagnostics

Visitation for outpatient procedures, diagnostics and clinic appointments remains the same. Adult or pediatric patients who have an appointment at a Geisinger clinic, laboratory or radiology department may have one person accompany them, if necessary.

Requirements	ED	OR	Inpatient	Outpatient	COVID-19 Unit
18 years of age or older	X	X	X	X	X
Bring form of identification	X	X	X	X	X
Be free of symptoms	X	X	X	X	X
Not have active COVID-19 infection	X	X	X	X	X
Complete health screening	X	X	X	X	X
Wear KN95 or N95					X
Wear Level 1 or close-fitting cloth mask	X	X	X	X	