

# Visiting a Patient: Hours and Guidelines

## Visitation Guidelines Effective 2/10/2022

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ChristianaCare has implemented visitor restrictions since March 2020. Visitation policies may differ between patients suspected of COVID-19 and those seeking care for other reasons, as outlined below. In addition, isolation and quarantine requirements may differ from what is allowed in the community, per CDC guidelines. Our visitation policy will continue to support the needs of our patients and their loved ones while protecting their safety and the safety of our caregivers.

Effective February 10, 2022, at 12:01 a.m., the following visiting policies apply. Visitor hours are from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. for the following:

### Hospitalized Patients

- Inpatients in our Christiana, Wilmington and Union hospitals may have one visitor daily between 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. The visitor does not need to be the same person for the entire day and can change from day to day. Visitors must be age 16 or older. Visitors will continue to receive a visitor badge at Christiana and Wilmington hospitals and a wrist band at Union Hospital. Visitors will continue to need to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test in the past 72 hours.
- Individuals coming to the emergency department may have one support person accompany them, who must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, but is not required to show proof of vaccination or a recent test. Once the patient is admitted to the hospital from the ED, the inpatient visitor policy will apply.
- Patients in OB Emergency may have one support person accompany them who must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms but is not required to show proof of vaccination or a recent test. Once the patient is admitted, the inpatient visitor policy will apply.

- Patients in Labor & Delivery may have two support people accompany them, one of whom may be a doula. Overnight visitation is allowed for the designated support persons. Once admitted after delivery, patients may have one support person.
- Patients in Postpartum, High Risk, Antepartum, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and pediatric units may have one support person. Overnight visitation is allowed for the designated visitor.
- Patients with intellectual or developmental disabilities, as defined by the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) or Maryland Department of Health (MDH), including chronic cognitive impairment such as dementia, may be accompanied by one support person. This includes patients presenting with an acute problem such as a stroke that is expected to require a support person/caretaker upon discharge.
- Up to two visitors total are allowed for patients in hospice who are at end of life.
  - The two visitors may visit at the same time.
  - The two visitors may switch with other family members as necessary at the discretion of the unit manager or charge nurse.
- Patients having outpatient surgery may have one support person accompany them. The support person must be 16 years of age or older.

### **Ambulatory Practices and Services:**

- Patients presenting to outpatient practices and ambulatory services may have one support person.

### **General Visitor Requirements**

- All support persons/visitors are screened for COVID-19 symptoms and will not be permitted entry if they fail the screening procedure.
- In addition to the symptom screening, visitors and support persons for hospital inpatients and for outpatient surgery must also show proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 OR have a negative COVID-19 test within the prior 72 hours. Fully vaccinated is defined as having had two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine. A digital or paper copy of their vaccination record or negative test will be accepted. Visitors/support persons for patients in Labor & Delivery, OB-GYN

emergency or the Emergency Department are not required to have proof of vaccination or a negative test.

- Support persons/visitors who have tested positive for COVID-19 (using any home or laboratory-based test) within the past 10 days are not allowed to visit. Please note that this differs from current CDC guidelines, which allow people to end isolation after 5 days with masking for another 5 days. This is to protect our vulnerable patient population, as persons may be contagious beyond 5 days. Persons with underlying conditions that weaken their immune systems should defer visitation for at least 20 days. ChristianaCare staff will not be assessing visitors for immune-compromising conditions.
- **Patients presenting to outpatient practices and ambulatory services may have one support person.** The support person will need to show proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 OR have a negative COVID-19 test within the prior 72 hours.
- For ambulatory visits, parents should make every attempt to find child care to avoid bringing non-patient children (i.e., siblings) into the facility. If childcare is not available, bringing such children to a visit must be discussed with the practice/area in advance.
- Visitors may not stay overnight except within Women & Children's Services as specified above.

### **All support persons/visitors/companions should:**

- Follow masking guidelines, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette precautions while in the common areas of the facility.
- Bring a medical, KN95, or N95-style mask from home if possible. If not masked or wearing a cloth mask upon arrival, a medical mask will be provided. Masks that are provided should be re-used until damaged or soiled, or no longer able to be breathed through. A new mask will be provided on subsequent visitation days.
  - N95 masks with valves are allowed as they have been shown to provide adequate source control.
- Respect social distancing of at least six feet as much as possible, including in the patient's room.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently with soap/water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and limit surfaces touched.
- Remain in the patient's room except for entry to/exit from the hospital/facility to the extent possible. Visitors should limit their movement within the facility

and if required to wait in the lobby, should remain masked and physically distant from others.

- All support persons/visitors/companions **must remain masked** for the duration of their visit, even if they are vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test. **This includes remaining masked while in the patient's room, due to the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to the patient they are visiting.** When possible, the patient should also be masked when visitors are present.
  - Visitation privileges may be discontinued at any time based on the clinical situation of the patient, visitor noncompliance with recommended procedures, or other factors.
- **Thank you for being a partner in your care. If you have questions, please speak with your nurse or a member of our care team.**