



DEACONESS HEALTH SYSTEM VISITORS' GUIDELINES

The purpose of this document is to establish guidelines and procedures for safe, restorative, patient-centered visitation in the hospital.

General Visitation Rights and Noted Exceptions to This Policy

- ▶ Patients or their lawful representatives have the right to request, restrict or revoke consent for visitation.
- ▶ Deaconess will permit visitation regardless of the patient's or visitor's race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, age, sex, gender orientation, sexual orientation, marital status or citizenship.
- ▶ Deaconess reserves the right to restrict or deny visitation when the visitation may interfere with the safety or health of the patient, staff or others present in the hospital.
- ▶ Except as noted below, this policy will not apply to patients receiving hospice care in a contracted hospice bed on a regular unit.
- ▶ Except as noted below, this policy will not apply to patients receiving care in the Encompass Health Acute Rehabilitation Unit located on Unit 4100.

Detailed Visitation Policy

- The patient or, if the patient is unable to represent him/herself, lawful personal representative, will designate one or two primary contact persons on admission who will be known as "family."
- While referred to as "family," the designees may include persons having no familial relationship to the patient. It's expected that at least one of the designated family members will be a person with the lawful authority to make health care decision for the patient in the event that the patient is or becomes unable to make those decisions.
- Designated family members and other visitors who wish to stay in the patient's room must be capable of looking after their own needs. Employees will not assume the care of a family member or visitor. If a family member or visitor experiences an emergency, the Rapid Response or Code Blue Team will be alerted, and the family member or visitor—when stabilized—will be transported to the emergency department for further care. If a family member or visitor is not able to look after their own needs, next of kin will be notified and asked to relocate the family member or visitor to the appropriate care setting.
- The designated family is expected to serve as contacts for other relatives and friends seeking information about the patient.
- Other relatives or friends may visit as desired by patient/lawful representative; however, these individuals will be subject to the guidelines in this policy.
- Clergy or their assistants may visit at any time with patient/lawful representative permission unless restricted by the attending physician or while direct patient care is being performed.

Visiting Hours and Facility Lockdown

- Visitation is allowed from 8 am to 8 pm.
- At 8 pm, an overhead page will announce the end of visiting hours.
- A grace period from 8 pm to 9 pm allows visitor good-byes.
- Facility lockdown is at 9 pm, after which all visitors must enter and exit through the emergency department entrance until visitation resumes the following morning.
- For the safety of patients, visitors and employees, a maximum of TWO visitors per patient are allowed in the hospital after lockdown, if approved by the nurse.
- After-hours visitors will be required to provide a picture ID (preferably a state-issued driver's license or ID) to verify their identity and receive a paper badge good for 24 hours.

Self-Screening & Masking

- Visitors will complete a self-screening process upon entering the hospital and other healthcare facilities.
 - Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours? If so, you should not visit.
 - fever or chills
 - new or unexplained onset of cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
 - new or unexplained loss of taste or smell
 - new or unexplained muscle aches
- If visitors are exhibiting any symptoms of an acute illness and are not at the facility for treatment or care, employees may ask the visitor to leave the facility.
- Masking requirements may be implemented during moderate to high respiratory viral community activity. When this occurs, visitors will be required to wear a mask at all times while in the facility. The mask should cover both the nose and mouth, and should be the type with ties or earloops (no gaiters).
- Deaconess Health System follows current CDC, local and state health department guidance.

Visitation By Children

- Children may visit on an inpatient unit during regular visiting hours when accompanied by an adult, unless respiratory illness restrictions are in place (such as flu, RSV, or COVID).
- Children must be supervised at all times by an adult (other than the patient), are not be left unattended and are not permitted to stay in the building overnight.
- No one under the age of 14 is permitted to visit the ICU outside of special circumstances that must be approved by the primary bedside/charge nurse.

Bedside Presence

- One or two visitors may remain in the patient's room if space and patient condition permit.
- Staff may permit additional bedside visitors under special circumstances, such as critical or declining condition.
- Visitors waiting to visit are expected to remain in the waiting area and not congregate in hallways or outside patient rooms.
- During nursing hand-off, visitors other than the one or two designated family members will be expected to leave the room.

Pet Visitation

- Pet visitation is permitted in accordance with *Deaconess Policy 10-32S: Pet Visitation, Pet Therapy, Group Animal Visitation in the Hospital*. Ask your nurse for details.
- Service animals are not "visitors," and their presence may not be restricted except as provided for in *Deaconess Policy 10-32S: Pet Visitation, Pet Therapy, Group Animal Visitation in the Hospital*.

Waiting Areas

- Waiting areas are for the convenience of all visitors. Therefore, no cots, sleeping bags or suitcases are permitted.
- The hospital assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen property of visitors.
- Deaconess will maintain the cleanliness of waiting areas, which includes the right to ask visitors to leave the waiting area, if necessary, while cleaning is completed.
- Staying in waiting rooms overnight is allowed only in the ICU waiting rooms.

Isolation

- All visitors must follow isolation precautions. Failure to comply may result in revocation of visitation privileges.
- Staff will instruct designated family in the interpretation of isolation control signs, doffing and donning of personal protective equipment and other infection control procedures as necessary.
- If a visitor is exhibiting symptoms of acute illness, staff may ask the visitor to conclude visitation.
- Visitors of patients with aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) may be asked to step out of the patient's room during AGPs, and patient door will be closed.
- Patients in the emergency department or inpatient nursing units may have visitation limited if patients are placed in isolation, such as undergoing infectious disease testing, (COVID-19, tuberculosis, etc.)

Limitation on Visitation

- Deaconess has a zero-tolerance policy for threats of violence toward patients, visitors or staff. Persons making such threats will have their visitation privileges revoked and may be subject to law enforcement intervention.
- Impaired or intoxicated visitors will be required to leave the hospital premises immediately. Further visitation will be solely at the discretion of staff. Visitation privileges may be revoked for the duration of the patient's stay.

Infectious Disease

- Visitors, including children, may be screened for exposure to or symptoms of infectious disease (such as chickenpox or flu), prior to entering certain patient care units.

Interpreters

- When an interpreter is required for patient communication, the interpreter is not a "visitor" and will be allowed to remain with the patient as necessary for medical interpretation.

These guidelines were approved and put in place July 17, 2023