

## Visiting Guidelines

### PURPOSE

1. To establish guidelines for visitation of hospital inpatients and outpatients based upon patient and family needs while ensuring a safe and restful environment for patients, visitors and employees.
2. To maintain an environment conducive to the provision of health care services in regards to patients' children in the inpatient and outpatient setting.
3. Swedish Covenant Hospital does not provide child care for patients receiving services/treatments (with the exception of the Women's Health Center).

### POLICY

Swedish Covenant Hospital (SCH) recognizes the importance of visitation to the comfort and healing of our patients, and welcomes visitation at all times without discrimination.

#### 1. Patient Visitation Guidelines

- a. Visitation is 24 hours, patient driven and encouraged at all times unless contraindicated.
  1. Suggested patient visiting hours are between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. These hours are considered the most conducive to visitation.
  2. SCH maintains quiet hours between 8 p.m. and 9 a.m. to encourage patient rest and recovery. Visitors are expected to act in a manner appropriate for this environment.
  3. Registered care partners wishing to stay overnight may be accommodated if possible, with respect for the safety and comfort of all patients. If a patient is in a semi-private room, the wishes and comfort of both parents in that room is considered.
  4. Visitors agree to abide by hospital rules with regard to conduct, and to be considerate of all patients and hospital staff.
- b. SCH does not maintain restrictions on patient visiting hours; however, the hospital does reserve the right to limit patient visitation in certain cases and certain areas, including but not limited to patient condition, unit circumstances, procedures, departments or nurse/physician clinical judgement. Clinical staff is encouraged to use their clinical judgement in determining visitation limitations, if needed.
- c. To maintain and foster an environment conducive to healing and in respect of the privacy of all patients, the number of visitors a patient has at any given time may be limited.
  1. Limited to four visitors, regardless of age, in a private patient room at one time.

2. Limited to two visitors, regardless of age, in a semi-private room at one time.
3. Additional visitors may be directed to wait in designated waiting areas and expected to act in a manner appropriate for the environment.

## **2. Child Visitor(s) (Inpatient and Outpatient)**

- a. Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) visiting hour guidelines are between the hours of 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. for children under the age of 12.
- b. For the safety of child visitors, children under the age of 12 must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult (other than the patient) at all times. Children left with a patient are considered unsupervised. In the event that children are left unsupervised on the nursing unit and outpatient areas, the unit nurse manager/department manager/designee is alerted.
- c. Parents/guardians are required to make certain that their children behave safely in a manner appropriate for the health care setting (no yelling, running, jumping on furniture or any other behavior that poses a safety risk to other patients, visitors and staff members). Hospital staff may ask parents/guardians to monitor their children's behavior.
- d. A minor is not allowed to stay overnight with any patient on any unit.

## **3. Infection Control**

- a. Visitors are expected to wash their hands or use waterless soap gel before and after entering a patient's room.
- b. Children visiting or accompanying patients during scheduled appointments must be free of signs of illness or communicable disease.
- c. Patients Under Isolation Precautions**
  1. Visitors must speak with nursing staff prior to entering the patient's room of a patient under isolation precautions for instructions regarding the proper use and disposal of protective equipment.
  2. For the wellbeing of the child and patient, infants and minors are discouraged from visiting patients under isolation precautions during quiet hours from 8 p.m. to 9 a.m.
  3. For the health and safety of visitors as well as the patient, the number of visitors at any given time may be limited for patients under isolation precautions.
- d. Visitors With Potential Communicable Diseases**
  1. For the protection of SCH patients and visitors, and to minimize the spread of potentially communicable diseases, visitors experiencing flu-like symptoms (such as fever, sore throat, cough, vomiting, etc.), or who have been exposed to a communicable disease, are asked to postpone patient visitation until symptoms resolve. Bringing very young infants and children to visit a hospitalized family member may put the infant, child and patient at risk of contracting an illness.

2. For the protection of all SCH patients and visitors, hospital-wide visitation restrictions may be implemented in times of increased incidence of communicable disease in the community, under recommendation but not limited to local, state and federal health departments.

#### **4. Public Health Incidents**

The hospital may limit visitation in the event of a public health crisis or widespread illness at any time. Under such circumstances, the Infection Control Committee determines if a public health crisis is occurring and decides when to initiate and discontinue the following provisions:

- a. Visitors are asked to reconsider their visit.
- b. Minors are not allowed to visit patients on any hospital unit.
- c. Obstetric Visitation:**
  1. Is limited to spouse, significant other or support person of mother
  2. Minors, including siblings, of the newborn are not allowed to visit
- d. Other infection control measures may be instituted as necessary to maintain the safety and health of patients, visitors and staff.

#### **5. Treatments and Procedures (Inpatient and Outpatient)**

- a. The patient may choose to have a visitor present during in-room procedures/treatments. Educate the visitor as to what to expect during the procedure/treatment.
- b. Hospital staff members may ask visitors to leave the patient room during physician/nurse rounding, in-room procedures requiring confidentiality or privacy for the patient (or roommate, if applicable) or emergency situations.
- c. If a patient is scheduled for an outpatient procedure, test or class and is accompanied by a minor, the staff may ask the patient to reschedule for a time when they are able to arrange child care.

#### **6. Special Considerations**

Certain patient care areas have special considerations related to visitation

- a. **Psychiatric Unit:** Call the psychiatric unit at extension 3817 for further directions or guidance.
- b. **Operating Room and Recovery Room**
  1. Patient visitors may briefly, visit the patient before the patient is brought to the operating room.
  2. Phase II PACU visiting is at the clinical judgement of nursing staff.
- c. **Intermediate Care Nursery**
  1. Only children that are siblings may visit the infant if accompanied by a parent/caregiver, or mother's support person.
  2. A total of two visitors at a time may visit the infant.
- d. **Pediatric Unit**

1. A total of three visitors (including the pediatric patient's parent/guardian) may visit the patient at a time between the hours of 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. (To encourage rest and recovery for all patients on the unit.)
2. Visitation between 8 p.m. and 9 a.m., one parent/guardian (or the parent/guardian's designee over the age of 18) may visit the pediatric patient.
3. Parents/guardian(s) may stay overnight at the child's bedside.
4. Minor siblings (or other children) may not visit or stay overnight between 8 p.m. and 9 a.m.

**e. Pediatric Isolation Precautions**

1. If the pediatric patient is under any type of isolation precautions, minors may not visit. At risk adults are discouraged from visiting. All visitors should follow isolation procedures outlined by the nursing staff.
2. All visitation rules are modifiable by the clinical judgment of the charge nurse, pediatric unit manager or director.

**f. Family Birthing Center**

1. In the **Labor and Delivery Unit**, visitation is limited to two support persons. Whenever possible, these individuals are consistent. Exceptions may be discussed with the patient's health care provider during the prenatal care.
2. Sibling minors present during the birth process are approved by the patient's health care provider during prenatal care. A sibling minor present during the birth process must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult who is not the patient's support person, regardless of time of day.
3. In the **Mother-Baby Unit**, four visitors (including the mother's support person) may visit at one time.
4. No children are allowed to stay overnight during the patient's postpartum period,

**g. Intensive Care Unit**

1. A total of two visitors may visit at one time.
2. No children under the age of 12 are permitted unless deemed appropriate by clinical staff in which case they must be accompanied by an adult.
3. The ICU follows the hospital guidelines as to visitation. This may be changed as deemed appropriate by clinical staff.

**7. Minors Accompanying Patient(s) in Outpatient Area(s)**

- a. Child care is not available at Swedish Covenant Hospital. It is advised that patients not bring children to their appointments.
- b. If a patient scheduled for an outpatient procedure/test/class such as, EKGs, monitoring device, laboratory testing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, diabetes education, respiratory services, etc. is accompanied by a minor, staff may ask the patient to reschedule for a time when they are able to arrange child care.

- c. For the health and safety of all patients, visitors and staff members, minors must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times. Minors are not permitted in treatment areas during procedures requiring the use of radioactive substances such as x-rays, nuclear medicine, CAT scans, MRIs, etc. If a patient undergoing such a procedure is accompanied by a minor, staff may ask the patient to reschedule the procedure for a time when they are able to arrange child care.
- d. If an event or issue is occurring that falls outside the scope of this policy, staff should alert the department manager.

## **8. Patient Visitation Restrictions**

- a. Visitation is restricted/limited based on the clinical judgement of health care professionals.

- b. Visitation restrictions may be requested by:

1. Patients
2. Patient's Power of Attorney
3. Relatives
4. Physicians
5. SCH Administration
6. Nursing Supervisors
7. Public Safety Supervisors

- c. **Enacting a Patient Visitation Restriction**

- 1. Requests for restrictions are made to the Public Safety Department at extension 1166.**

1. A public safety officer arrives on the unit and completes the Patient Visitation Restriction form
2. The public safety supervisor approves and signs.
3. The public safety officer copies and distributes the Patient Visitation Restriction form to all information desks, the nursing office and the patient care unit.

- 2. In the visiting guidelines section, limitations or restrictions are identified and discussed with the patient as appropriate.**

1. If only immediate family is allowed to visit, specify those individuals and their relationship to the patient.
2. In the case of suspected abuse/neglect, the Public Safety Department will refer to abuse neglect policy and procedure.

- 3. Enacting a Telephone Call Restriction for a Patient**

1. Contact the unit nurse manager to initiate a telephone restriction, or the nursing office if a telephone restriction is required during evening and night shifts on behalf of the patient.
2. The nursing office contacts the telephone operator of the Department of Telecommunications and requests to tum-on the do not disturb extension.
3. Nursing office provides operator with name, room and bed number of patient.

4. Obtain the public safety supervisor's signature on the completed Patient Visitation Restriction form.

**d. Lobby Services**

Checks all visitors at the information check point and request identification.

**e. Public Safety**

1. Approves and distributes copies to the following:
  1. Lobby Services
  2. Nursing Office
  3. Patient Floor
  4. Public Safety Office
2. Patient Visitation Restriction forms are updated daily to reflect room changes and are distributed to the above areas.
3. In the event of a complication or incident, a General Incident Report is completed.

**NOTE:** If an individual is not allowed to visit the patient and is found on campus, notify the Public Safety Department at extension 1166 immediately.