

Essential Caregiver Presence Guidelines

Welcoming caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Caregivers are important to the well-being and quality of life of our patients. As we are still in a pandemic, St. Joseph's is gradually increasing caregiver presence within our buildings. We must also balance protecting everyone in our facilities from COVID-19.

We continue to limit the number of people in our sites. At this time, general visiting is not permitted. However, designated essential caregivers are welcome, based on direction from the patient/resident and care team.

Who qualifies as an essential caregiver

A caregiver is a person identified by the patient/resident as someone who provides important personal, social, psychological and physical support, assistance and care. A caregiver does not have to be living with the person they are supporting or related to the patient/resident. A caregiver must be at least 18 years of age. For information on caregivers under 18, please contact the care team directly.

Patients staying in hospital at St. Joseph's can designate two individuals to be their essential caregivers.

To arrange a visit

Patients or designated caregivers can request visiting privileges through any member of the care team. The care team member will then take the request to their leader. Approval for visiting must be obtained in advance. How often and how long a visit can occur is decided in partnership with the care team.

What must caregiver do?

To keep everyone safe, caregivers must:

- Pass screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at the building entrance. Those who fail screening cannot enter the building.
- Wear a mask while in the building, which will be provided at the screening entrance
 - Clean their hands with hand sanitizer before entering the building, a care area and patient room and when leaving those areas.
- Remain physically distanced (6 feet) from others at all times.
- Adhere to time restrictions for their visit as required.
- Stay home if feeling unwell, have COVID-19 symptoms or exposure to someone who has COVID-19 and inform the patient/resident's care team immediately if symptoms develop during or following a visit.

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The safety and health of all patients/residents, staff and family caregivers at St. Joseph's is paramount. Caregiver presence may be revoked as a result of ignoring or defying these requirements.

Visiting hours

- Caregivers are welcome at any time of day in consultation with the patient/resident care team.
- Quiet Hours are observed between 10 pm and 7 am. To promote rest and well-being of all patients/residents, everyone is requested to: speak in hushed tones, dim overhead lights and silence electronic devices.

Virtual visits

- Virtual visits, which have been facilitated by staff throughout the pandemic, are on-going. Please contact your loved one's care team for more information on virtual visits.

Caregivers for outpatients

Those accompanying outpatients attending a clinic appointment or the Urgent Care Centre will only be permitted to enter the building **if deemed necessary** based on the needs of the patient. Otherwise, caregivers will be asked to wait outside of the building.

As the pandemic evolves, St. Joseph's will continually review our visiting processes and make changes to better accommodate our patients, residents, veterans and families as permitted. We thank you for your patience and understanding.