

# Visiting a Loved One with COVID-19 on the Medical-Surgical Unit

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, current visitor guidelines limit the number of people who can visit COVID-19 positive patients and the amount of time they can spend in the room. The changes help keep our patients, staff, and visitors safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. These guidelines may change from day-to-day as needed. Please confirm the most current visitor guidelines with your nurse.

## How to choose a representative for your loved one

Medical-Surgical (Med-Surg) units are places for ill or injured patients who need a high level of medical care. Right now, only 1 visitor will be allowed to see a loved one who has tested positive for COVID-19. When thinking about who this visitor should be, please keep these things in mind:

- **Is the person healthy?** Visitors must be in good health. They cannot have any signs of illness. They cannot have COVID-19 or be waiting for a COVID-19 test result.
- **Is the person able to wear personal protective equipment (PPE)?** PPE is special clothing designed to prevent infection. When visiting the Med-Surg unit, visitors must wear masks, gowns, gloves, and other protective equipment. The equipment will be provided, and staff will help make sure it's worn correctly. (See [page 2](#) for more details.)
- **Is the person able to communicate clearly with the care team?** The hospital setting can be loud and hectic. There are many machines and devices that make noise. Medical staff will be wearing protective equipment that may cover their mouths or muffle their speech. This makes it difficult to communicate, so it's important that the visitor be able to hear and speak well in this setting.
- **Is the person able to communicate effectively outside the hospital?** The visitor will be responsible for taking accurate information about the condition of their loved one back to other family members. They may need to assist with making decisions about the care their loved one receives.



Current guidelines permit 1 visitor for 15 minutes to a COVID-19 positive patient on a Med-Surg unit. As you consider who will be the representative, remember that this person will need to be the representative for as long as your loved one remains in the hospital.

## Other options for connecting with patients

Although visitation to COVID-19 positive patients is limited to 1 visitor for 15 minutes, we know that it's important to be able to see, speak with, and interact with loved ones. We offer other options for you to connect with those you care about, including but not limited to: Apple FaceTime or Google Duo video visits, telephone calls, and messages sent through staff. Please ask your nursing staff what might work best for your family.

## Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)

When visiting a loved one with COVID-19 in the Medical Surgical Unit, you must follow these steps to protect your health and the health of others:

### 1 Answer questions

Before you go into your loved one's room, you will be asked questions by the care team about your health, including if you have any symptoms of COVID-19.

If you have special concerns about your personal health, talk with the nurse or doctor caring for your loved one. There are risks associated with visiting a loved one with COVID-19.

### 2 Wash your hands

The care team will show you where to wash your hands. Follow these steps:

- **Wet your hands** under clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- **Lather your hands** by rubbing them together with the soap.
- **Scrub your hands** for at least 20 seconds. Be sure to clean the back of your hands and wrists, between the fingers, and under your nails.
- **Rinse your hands** well under clean running water.
- **Dry your hands** with a clean towel or air dry them. Use a towel to turn off the tap.

Once you have entered the room, you must stay there until you plan on leaving. You will not be allowed to go in and out.



### 3 Put on PPE

You must wear PPE during the entire visit with your loved one, including:

- **Gloves.** Always keep your gloves on while in the room. Avoid touching your face or skin while wearing the gloves. Wash your hands immediately once you remove the gloves.
- **Gown.** A gown prevents droplets in the air from landing on your skin and clothing.
- **Mask.** Wearing a mask correctly is the best way to lower the spread of COVID-19. **Do not touch or pull the mask down or away from your nose or mouth while you are wearing it.** You must wear the mask even after you have stepped out of the room.
- **Eye protection.** Goggles or a face shield must be worn at all times while in the room. COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching your eyes or if virus particles get into them.

### 4 Remove PPE

When you are finished with your visit, call the nurse. A member of the care team will help you safely remove the PPE. **You must wash your hands after removing PPE and before leaving the area.**

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