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**Saline Health System**

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Owner Beth Felty:  
Infection  
Preventionist  
Area Administration  
Applicability Saline Memorial  
Hospital

## Visitation Policy

### SCOPE:

This policy applies to Saline Memorial Hospital.

### PURPOSE:

To meet the needs to patients and visitors in allowing patient visitation, while protecting patient privacy and facilitating an environment of safety.

### POLICY:

Saline Memorial Hospital facilitates visitation of patients, while protecting the privacy of all patients and providing a safe environment.

### Patient and Visitor Screening:

#### A. Visitors / Contractors / Reps / Students:

By entering the building, each visitor attests that they do not have any of the following signs or symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle or Body aches
- Headache

- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or Runny nose
- Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea

If individual answers yes to any above questions - Do not enter building unless you are seeking care.

**A. Patients**

Patients will screen for signs and symptoms of COVID – 19 and other infectious diseases, including but not limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle or Body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or Runny nose
- Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea

If individual answers yes to any questions – Please proceed to appropriate Check-In point while wearing mask, maintaining social distancing, and using proper hand hygiene. Masks will be provided if needed and are available from the Main Entrance Information Desk or at the Outpatient Department or Emergency Department registration desk.

**Emergency Department:**

1. The Team Leader or Charge Nurse, in coordination with the ED Physician, will manage visitation in the department.
  - a. Approval of visitation will be based on, but not limited to:
    - i. Patient condition
    - ii. Patient age (minor patients will be allowed visitors at all times, except in an emergency situation and then consultation should occur to decide if family presence is an option)
    - iii. Diagnosis
    - iv. Care requirements
    - v. Patient request
    - vi. Department-wide activities
2. Generally, a patient may have 2 visitors at a time
3. When visitation is restricted, the Team Leader, Charge Nurse and/or primary nurse will communicate with visitors to give patient condition updates.
4. Family members/significant others will be included in the discharge teaching process, as appropriate.
5. Facility co-workers who are not directly involved in the care of the patient will comply with this policy as a visitor.

**Intensive Care Unit and Step-Down Unit:**

1. The Team Leader or Charge Nurse, in coordination with the ED Physician, will manage visitation in the department.
  - a. Approval of visitation will be based on, but not limited to:
    - i. Patient condition
    - ii. Patient age (minor patients will be allowed visitors at all times, except in an emergency situation and then consultation should occur to decide if family presence is an option)
    - iii. Diagnosis
    - iv. Care requirements
    - v. Patient request
    - vi. Department-wide activities
2. Generally, a patient may have 2 visitors at a time, visitors must be at least 12 years old.

3. When visitation is restricted, the Team Leader, Charge Nurse and/or primary nurse will communicate with visitors to give patient condition updates.
4. Family members/significant others will be included in the discharge teaching process, as appropriate.
5. Facility co-workers who are not directly involved in the care of the patient will comply with this policy as a visitor.
6. If the safe environment of the department is in jeopardy, security and if necessary, the Benton Police Department will be notified to assist ED co-workers in maintaining the safe environment.

**Pre-Op and PACU area:**

1. Visitors are not allowed in the Phase I PACU area, unless the well being of the patient requires them to be there. Other patient privacy is protected with curtains when visitors are in the PACU.
2. Once the patient is discharged to Phase II family members are allowed to stay with them, limited to 2 at a time.
3. Special considerations are made for pediatric patients. Parents remain with their children at all times except when they go into the operating room. Once the child is awake in the PACU the parents are with the child and remain with them until the time of release from the hospital.
4. Family members are asked to remain in the waiting room until the patients are prepared for their procedure, unless the patient is not legally responsible for themselves.
5. Vendors visiting the OR.PACU are required to check in thru the control station, repx, and wear a vendor's badge.

**Nursery:**

1. Parents (or other significant persons designated by infant ID bracelets) may visit in the nursery at any time except during times when nursery activity/patient privacy may be compromised.
2. Visitation is limited to two adult family members. Siblings less than 12 years of age are allowed to visit when accompanied by an adult.
3. The only children who may visit in the nursery are siblings of the hospitalized infant.
4. Grandparents may visit the nursery with a parent of the hospitalized infant.
5. All visitors must wash hands thoroughly with antimicrobial soap upon entering the nursery.
6. Any visitor who is symptomatic of or has a known viral or bacterial infection must not enter the nursery. If a visitor is visibly sick, he/she may be asked to leave.
7. Visitation may be limited as necessary during flu/cold season and during outbreaks of other illnesses as infants are at greater risk for illness/infection.
8. Information concerning level II nursery babies will only be given to the mother and second bracelet holder, either in person or over the telephone. The bracelet identification number will be used to verify parent identity over the telephone. All other family members/friends will be referred to the bracelet holders for information.
9. In the event of an emergency situation, all visitors may be asked to leave the nursery.

**Pediatrics:**

1. Patients under the age of 18 must have a family member, or another person well known by the child with him/her at all times. This person must be at least 18 years of age unless the parent is younger than 18 years of age.
2. Two adults will be allowed to spend the night with the child.
3. Two adults and siblings are allowed to visit.
4. Family/friends will complete their visit by 9pm.

**Behavioral Health:**

To facilitate continued interactions between patients and their family visiting hours are permitted on the behavioral health unit.

- A.
  1. To maintain the safety of the Behavioral Health treatment areas, visitation is scheduled, structured, and supervised.
    - a. The staff have the responsibility to provide a safe environment for all patients and persons visiting within the hospital.
    - b. Regular visiting hours may vary by unit and these times are communicated to the patient and family upon admission.
  2. Visitation is considered therapeutic for patients unless clinically contraindicated.
    - a. Visitation is scheduled at times outside of therapeutic programming so as not to interfere with treatment.
    - b. A unit schedule with specific times for groups and other therapeutic activities is available.
    - c. Each unit has a visitation schedule and guidelines specific to the unit population.
    - d. Due to the acuity level at the facility, it may be necessary to postpone visitation.
      - i. This will be communicated to the patients and their families.
      - ii. Once visitation is resumed, the patient will be notified and can contact their families.
    - e. These guidelines are also provided to the patient/family in the unit handbook upon admission.
- B. General visitation rules:
  1. All visitors will be required to check in and out at the nurses desk and must agree to sign the confidentiality agreement log.
    - a. Staff will review safety concerns and contraband.
    - b. Visitors are not allowed to bring personal belongings onto the unit.
    - c. Visitors should be encouraged to leave belongings in their vehicle or utilize the lockers outside of the units.

2. Visitors must be above the age of 18 to visit patients on the Behavioral Health Unit.
3. Due to limited space, patients are restricted to two visitors at a time.
4. Visitors are to obey the Non-Smoking - Tobacco Free Policy.
5. If personal items are brought in for the patient during designated visiting hours, the nursing staff will bring any items brought for patients back to the desk for review.
  - a. Items brought for patients will be checked by staff, and the policy for contraband will be strictly followed.  
Patients may not have food, personal hygiene items, or other items defined as contraband brought in by visitors.
  - b. All patient belongings brought onto unit will be cataloged on the patients items list with the date.
6. Visitors will be asked to leave other items such as purses, bags, etc. in their car.
7. Visitation is scheduled as indicated in the unit handbook or program schedule.
8. Visitors will be instructed to notify nursing personnel immediately if a patient becomes threatening toward them or becomes increasingly agitated during their visit. It may be necessary to stop the visit and reschedule for a later time.
9. Professionals such as attorneys/clergy may visit after consultation with a member of the treatment team. Visiting professionals will observe the same rules as other visitors.
10. Visitors with known acute infectious diseases or acute respiratory infections will be discouraged from visiting relatives. Treatment team may restrict visitation on a case by case basis.
11. A patient's personal pet will not be allowed into therapeutic areas for visitation during hospitalization.
12. Visitors will be escorted to the visitation area by staff.
  - a. Visitors may not visit in the patient's room unless the patient's medical condition mandates it necessary.
  - b. Visitors will be allowed in designated areas of the hospital only. If visitors are found in areas that have been designated as off-limits, staff will ask the visitor to leave those areas and possibly the hospital, depending on the circumstances.
13. Visitors who do not observe the visitation rules and are disruptive to the therapeutic milieu may be asked to leave.
14. Casual visitation by former patients is not allowed for three (3) months after their discharge date. Effort will be made to restrict visitation by former patients to the treating facility for three (3) months after discharge date.
15. Exceptions to regular visiting hours may be appropriate if the visitor lives a long distance from the hospital or if work schedules prohibit visiting during regular hours. Clinical staff shall fully inform the patient and family of visiting hours and explore the need for possible exceptions.

- a. Visitation may not interfere with scheduled program activities.
  - b. Exceptions to regular visiting hours will not be solely for the convenience of the visitor but will be based on therapeutic value to the patient.
  - c. In the event an exceptions is requested to the scheduled visiting hours, the Charge Nurse or Program Director will approve the change.
- C. In addition to the above, members of the treatment team may identify justification or additional modification to visitation on a case by case basis. This will be reviewed by the treatment team and reflected in the medical record.
- 1. At times, the patient's clinical status or safety level may prevent safe participation in visitation. Efforts will be made to communicate these circumstances to the family, with appropriate consent.
  - 2. The Charge Nurse may restrict or prohibit a visitor if the safety of the patient or unit is compromised. The charge nurse should then notify the house supervisor, program director, or administrator on call as necessary.
  - 3. In the event that a visitor is suspected of passing drugs, the visitor will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Should the visitor resist, the Security Department should be called to escort the visitor off the premises.

## Isolations patients:

- 1. Visitors will be asked to perform hand hygiene upon entering and exiting an isolation room.
- 2. Visitors will be educated on the related disease process, the importance of wearing appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment), and required to wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment **as needed** to prevent the spread of infectious disease.
- 3. Visitation may be limited due to infectious illness as recommended by CDC.

## Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Policy Committee	Tara Watts: Quality Specialist	04/2023
	Beth Felty: Infection Preventionist	04/2023