

SWEDISH COVID-19 PATIENT SUPPORTER GUIDELINES / “VISITOR POLICY”

In effect June 9, 2020; Last update in effect August 14, 2020

As COVID-19 continues to be a concern in the Puget Sound, Swedish remains committed to the safety of caregivers, patients, and community members. In response, we have created data-driven policies and will continue to adjust guidelines in order to best align with the evolving climate of COVID-19. Safety and high-quality care for our patients is our highest priority and we require **universal masking, hand hygiene, physical distancing, and screening protocols for all persons entering our facilities.**

To keep our hospitals and facilities as safe as possible, we continue to restrict well-wishing visitors who are visiting loved ones in-person. However, we understand our patients also have many medical needs requiring compassionate care and we recognize the support of loved ones is vital to recovery. We fully support virtual methods of visiting at all times and will continue to promote creative ways for patients to connect with loved ones.

As experts report the reduction of COVID-19 cases in our area, and because there sometimes is no substitute for in-person support and compassion, Swedish’s “Visitor Policy” will be adjusted. **Beginning July 7, 2020, in the In-Patient areas of Swedish, each patient may have one (1) Patient Supporter per hospitalization, and must be the same person the entirety of the hospitalization.** This will continue so long as the PPE supply allows.

A patient supporter is a person whose purpose is to aid in a patient’s recovery and healing. Upon registration, the patient may identify one (1) individual as their patient supporter who may visit during the duration of the patient’s stay, during visiting hours. Patients needs to inform their designated patient supporter and coordinate visits. This may be a friend or relative. **For COVID-19 patients, please follow the specific guidelines indicated below.**

Patient Supporters planning to visit patients in the ICU (Intensive Care Units), should call in advance to arrange a time that is approved by the care team.

We continue to permit **essential** patient supporters needed for escort assistance for mobility, interpretation (until interpreter can be assigned for medical advice), emotional or medical decision-making support as long as they pass a screening.

*Our Emergency Departments, Women’s and Children’s, SMC Clinics, Imaging, Radiology, Lab, Surgical Services, and SMG/Ambulatory areas have set specific restrictions for limiting Patient Supporters that can be referenced in this document; Patient Supporters may not always be allowed.

All Patient Supporters (regardless of area of Swedish, unless otherwise indicated at the unit):

1. Must enter through each campus’ Entry Control Points
2. Must be at least 18 years of age (no underage siblings)
3. Must be screened, be free of any COVID-19 symptom(s) within the last 24 hours, and must be afebrile
4. Must wear an isolation mask and follow physical distancing protocols at all times while in the care facility.

Wearing personal masks are encouraged; N95 with a valve, scarves, and bandanas are restricted but may wear medical mask overtop. Medical masks will be provided if personal masks are unavailable. For visitors unable to wear a face mask, face shields will be provided and required to be worn in place of a mask.

5. Must practice hand hygiene with provided hand sanitizer. Anyone wearing medical gloves at entries must remove the gloves, keep them off while inside the facility, and practice hand hygiene.
6. Food and drink are permitted to be brought inside patient rooms. Although discouraged, visitors may eat in patient rooms in the case they are staying for longer periods of time. If visitors are eating in the room, they must stop and mask whenever a caregiver enters the room. If visitors are eating, they should also be physically distanced from the patient. Visitors should always wear a mask at all other times and practice hand hygiene before and after eating.
7. Upon entry, must go directly to-and-from the patient's location and are not permitted to wait or lounge in other areas (i.e.: hallways or cafeteria). If necessary and at the unit's discretion, patient supporter may leave the unit and premises, and are permitted to return on the same day for additional visits. This does not apply to Covid patient supporters due to PPE usage.
8. Must use designated public restrooms on the unit and may not use patient restrooms
9. Must leave and exit the premises at the request of the direct care nurse or nurse manager if needed
10. Must only visit during campus visiting hours
11. Overnight stays are restricted and only permitted if coordinated with direct care nurse or nurse manager. Shared patient rooms are excluded.

Things to Note and Instructions for Regulating Patient Support Visits:

1. Patients being visited are only allowed one (1) Patient Supporter during hospitalization. Additional individuals will not be permitted. Visitors will not be permitted to wait inside or in "waiting" room areas.
2. Direct care nurse or nurse manager will be responsible for limiting one (1) support person in order to provide the best care and ensure physical distancing. Additional individuals will be asked to leave.
3. Shared patient rooms will be monitored by the direct care nurse or nurse manager to ensure proper physical distancing is achievable; Patient Supporters may be asked to leave. Curtains must be drawn, and masks worn.
4. For hospitalized patients recovering from COVID-19 or PUIs, support visits should be minimized. Entry into the patient's room is at the discretion of the direct care nurse and nurse manager, and subject to the availability and use of appropriate personal protective equipment. Entry control points should always attempt to coordinate directly with the direct care nurse and nurse manager for this population. (more information below)
5. Patients who are end of life may have two (2) Patient Supporters, regardless of the patient's COVID-19 status. Children (under the age of 18) visiting at EOL circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis and must be highly coordinated with direct care nurse and campus leadership to ensure safety can be achieved.
6. Entry Control Points will not be responsible for regulating visits but will inform arriving Patient Supporters of the guidelines and will always use their best judgment. Units, caregivers, and leaders will need to partner to uphold these guidelines.

COVID-19 Visitation Guidelines

1. **For hospitalized patients recovering from COVID-19 or PUIs (patients under investigation), visits should be restricted.** Visitation for the designated 1 patient supporter will only be approved on a case by case basis by the direct care nurse, nurse manager, or senior campus administrator. The designation of the patient supporter will be identified by the patient or the patient's surrogate decision-maker. Examples of situations for consideration include end of life, prolonged hospitalizations, or other extenuating circumstances.

2. If a patient supporter is approved, an appointment for visits will need to be arranged by the supporter by calling the nursing unit and coordinating a time. During the call, the supporter will be asked to describe to the staff why the patient is hospitalized. If they are unable to demonstrate an awareness of COVID-19, they will not be allowed visitation (the exception to this is if the supporter is the surrogate decision maker and the patient is unable to provide disclosure).
3. If visitation is permitted, upon arrival on the unit, the staff will provide instruction/assistance to the support person regarding donning and doffing of PPE. The informed consent language regarding risk of visitation will be provided in writing and these steps will be documented by the RN in EPIC.

*Additional Guidelines and Restrictive Criteria Beyond In-Patient Areas

The following is in response to the ability to regulate safe physical distancing and exposure.

Emergency Department Guidelines:

1. At the discretion of the ED team: ED patients will be allowed only one (1) Patient Supporter per visit (not multiple people).
2. Pediatric patients under the age of 18 may have two (2) parents or guardians, but no additional people.
3. Patient Supporters are not allowed for patients presenting with COVID-19 symptoms (PUI) and are not allowed for known COVID-19 positive patients.
4. Patient Supporters must be screened, be free of any COVID-19 symptom(s) within the last 24 hours and must be afebrile.
5. Patient Supporters must wear an isolation mask, practice hand hygiene, and follow physical distancing while in the care facility.
6. No minors will be allowed to accompany (unless no alternate care options exist).
7. No high-risk Patient Supporters will be allowed (immunocompromised, elderly, pregnant).
8. Patient Supporter must go directly to, and stay in, the patient's location; if Supporter leaves the room, they must leave the ED (with possible bathroom exceptions).
9. Patient supporters or others are not allowed to wait in the waiting room; must exit and wait elsewhere.

Note: ED Entry Control Points servicing other departments must apply the appropriate guidelines outlined in this document.

Women's and Children's Guidelines:

1. **All children in In-Patient areas** under the age of 18 years (including NICU patients) may have two (2) people present (parent, or guardian). These two people must be non-exposed and asymptomatic per screening. They must remain at the bedside the entire visit and may not come and go. For the NICU this must be the mother and the designated 4th band holder. Underage siblings are not permitted to visit.
2. **Laboring patients** may have two support persons who may be a doula, friend, or family member. Multiple visitors will not be able to rotate. Only one support person will be allowed in a C-Section. Once the patient delivers, only the support person with the second adult band will be allowed to stay with the patient on the post-partum unit if the support person is not symptomatic and has not had a positive COVID-19 test. The support person must be at least 18 years of age. The second parent of the baby may be present regardless of age. Support persons must remain in the room with the patient at all times.

3. **Laboring patients that are COVID-19 positive or are awaiting results** may have one support person present during labor and delivery. One support person may be present on post-partum if the support person is not symptomatic and has not had a positive COVID-19 test. This support person must remain in the room with the patient at all times. No support persons will be allowed in the C-Section room, one support person and a doula may be present in pre-op and post-op. The support person must be at least 18 years of age. The second parent of the baby may be present regardless of age. Support persons must remain in the room with the patient at all times.
4. **Pregnant patients having an ultrasound or other pregnancy related appointment** will be permitted one (1) Support Person to accompany them regardless of location or inpatient, outpatient status. The support person must be 18 years of age or older, unless the chosen support person is the other parent of the child, in that case they can be any age. No other minors are allowed, unless the situation is emergent and there is no other option for the minors who have accompanied the patient. Support person must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and be asymptomatic in order to accompany the patient.
5. Patient Supporters must be screened, be free of any COVID-19 symptom(s) within the last 24 hours, and must be afebrile.
6. Patient Supporters must wear an isolation mask, practice hand hygiene, and follow physical distancing while in the care facility.
7. If necessary and at the unit's discretion, patient supporters may leave the unit and premises, and are permitted to return.

Behavioral Health In-Patient Units:

1. Behavioral Health In-Patient Units will not permit Patient Supporters at this time.

Surgical and Procedural Patient Guidelines:

1. Only **essential** Patient Supporters needed for escort assistance for mobility, interpretation, emotional, or medical decision-making support are allowed to escort a patient. No visitors or additional escorts are allowed except for pediatric patients.
2. An essential supporter is allowed to escort a patient to the appointment check-in, and then must leave immediately; cannot accompany the patient during the appointment and cannot wait inside the hospital. Patient Supporters will need to coordinate pick-up prior to discharge.
3. No Patient Supporters will be allowed in patient care areas for pre-op or PACU, except for pediatric cases (patients under 18 years of age).
4. Pediatric patients are always allowed one (1), parent or guardian, to escort. Only asymptomatic parents are allowed. If there is not an asymptomatic parent available, the case will be delayed. Parent of pediatric patients are permitted to wait in the surgical waiting areas and follow physical distancing standards.
5. No visitors are allowed at this time for any patients in the outpatient care areas; Patient Supporters will need to coordinate pick-up prior to discharge.
6. Patient Supporters will need to arrange pick up at the exit points and cannot go inside for pick up.
7. Discharge instructions will be given over the phone when appropriate or in person upon pick up if absolutely necessary and coordinated by the RN (i.e. bedside instruction and demonstration is required).

8. Waiting for all short-term care and outpatient cases should be outside the facility if possible. Patient Supporters should always be accessible by phone and have cell signal.
9. Patient Supporters must be screened, be free of any COVID-19 symptom(s) within the last 24 hours and must be afebrile.
10. Patient Supporters must wear an isolation mask, practice hand hygiene, and follow physical distancing while in the care facility.

SMC Clinics, SMG Clinics, Laboratory, Breast Imaging, and Radiology Guidelines:

1. **Pregnant patients having an ultrasound or other pregnancy related appointment** will be permitted one (1) Support Person to accompany them regardless of location or inpatient, outpatient status. The support person must be 18 years of age or older, unless the chosen support person is the other parent of the child, in that case they can be any age. No other minors are allowed, unless the situation is emergent and there is no other option for the minors who have accompanied the patient. Support person must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and be asymptomatic in order to accompany the patient.
2. No Patient Supporters are permitted to accompany patients unless there is need for escort assistance essential for mobility, interpretation, emotional, or medical decision-making support. No other Patient Supporter is permitted at this time and may wait in their car.
3. Pediatrics under two months may have two (2) people present (advocate, parent or guardian)
4. Pediatrics over two months may have one (1) person present (advocate, parent or guardian)
5. Patient Supporters must be screened, be free of any COVID-19 symptom(s) within the last 24 hours, and must be afebrile.
6. Patient Supporters must wear an isolation mask, practice hand hygiene, and follow physical distancing while in the care facility.

This guidance cannot anticipate every situation. Campus leadership may make exceptions to it based on the realities of a given situation, using their best judgment to protect patients and caregivers, acting out of love and compassion for those involved.

Screening Requirements Prior to Entry:

All people are required to follow universal masking, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. All people are required to follow the screening process, which is subject to change. All people are required to attest they are free of COVID-19 symptoms in the last 24 hours and have their temperature taken (symptoms subject to change).

- Fever over 100°
- Chills
- New cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches (myalgias)
- Fatigue/feeling ill/malaise
- New loss of smell or taste
- New or unusual congestion/runny nose

- Nausea/diarrhea/vomiting
- New or unusual headache