



## A message from your care team

**As you would expect, the situation around COVID-19 (Coronavirus) changes rapidly. We are writing to inform you of the latest change that may impact you in the event you are hospitalized. Please read this message from University of Washington Medical Center for detailed information:**

To our valued patients and their families,

Our patient care philosophy depends greatly on engaging families to be part of the healing process. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), we must take extra steps to protect our patients, staff, visitors and the community. Effective immediately, we are restricting visitations within our UW Medicine hospitals. All routine visiting is being suspended until the transmission of COVID-19 is no longer a threat to our patients, staff and community.

The decision to restrict visitors was difficult and made only after careful consideration as we witness schools, houses of worship and other venues restrict gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We recognize that there are times when having a visitor or family member present is crucial. In these cases, visitors will be allowed based on the exceptions listed below. Please note in all cases a visitor will only be allowed if they do not have symptoms of respiratory infection (fever, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath). Additionally, children under the age of 16 will not be allowed except under extraordinary circumstances. Exceptions include:

- Patients who are at the end-of-life may have 2 visitors.
- Patients with disruptive behavior, where a family member is key to their care, may have 1 visitor.
- Patients who have altered mental status or developmental delays (where caregiver provides safety) may have 1 visitor.
- Minors under the age of 18 may have one visitor, parents, or guardians.
- Patients undergoing surgery or procedures may have 1 visitor who must leave the hospital as soon as possible after the procedure/surgery.
- Patients who have an appointment at a UW Medicine hospital-based clinic, laboratory, or radiology, as well as those visiting the Emergency Department, may have 1 person with them.
- Patients who are receiving lodging services as part of their medical treatment plan are excluded from the visitor restriction policy.
- Patients who have a discharge plan that involves necessary caregiver training to be completed to ensure safety for discharge.

Visitors allowed must stay in the patient's room the entire time of the visit. Once the visitor leaves the patient room, they must leave the medical center.

Please note that visitors will not be allowed for patients with a pending or positive COVID-19 test.

We appreciate your understanding during these uncertain times. Our goal is to protect you, your loved ones and our staff. If you have any questions, please contact the manager on your unit.

Handwritten signature of Lisa Brandenburg in black ink.

Lisa Brandenburg  
President  
UW Medicine Hospitals & Clinics

Handwritten signature of Tim Dellit in black ink.

Tim Dellit, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
UW Medicine

## **Updated UWMC Visitor Policy Questions and Answers**

### **How long will we restrict visitors to our hospitals and clinics?**

At this time the timeline is uncertain. We are monitoring governmental recommendations to minimize the opportunity for public exposure to COVID-19. We continue to monitor these recommendations and make adjustments as necessary.

### **Are there exceptions to our emergency visitor policy?**

Please see the message from UWMC about exceptions. We tried to identify all exceptions but know that there will be instances or circumstances that will need additional review. For example, we are not allowing visitors under the age of 16 but would certainly allow someone under 16 to enter the hospital for an imminent death of a family member. Any further exceptions will need to be approved by an administrator.

### **This new policy seems rather restrictive and difficult to manage.**

We are in a community crisis and our goal is to protect all our staff, patients and the general public including visitors. We believe that our exception policy is generous in light of the current public health crisis over COVID-19.

### **Are other hospitals restricting visitors?**

Yes. Other hospitals are restricting visitors and access to inpatient and clinic areas to help minimize exposure.

### **We have some long-term patients who have had family members present regularly for several weeks. Does this policy change apply to them?**

Yes. Managers should have a discussion with these families to alert them of this temporary change in policy. Given the heightened public concern over COVID-19, this temporary change in policy is the right thing to do to help keep our hospitals and community safe.