

BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS VISITATION POLICY

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 4, 2021

Visiting Hours and Guidelines by Department

To maintain a safe environment for our patients, we must keep the number of visitors to a minimum. Video visits are preferred, and our staff can help you set one up. All patients being admitted to an inpatient area will receive a COVID-19 test. Visitors are not allowed in patient care areas until a negative result has been received for the patient.

Exceptions to the general visitation guidelines are noted below:

General Visitation: Inpatient Areas (Patients Without COVID-19)			
Patient Population	Visitors	Hours/Duration	Notes
Adult Medical and Surgical Inpatient	One healthy visitor	12 pm - 8 pm Med/Surg/Observation 2 pm – 8 pm CCU/PCU	60 min visit med/surg 30 min CCU 60 min PCU
Pediatric Inpatient	One healthy visitor	All hours	
Birth Center (Labor & Delivery/Maternity)	One healthy visitor	All hours-Birth Partner 2-8pm - visitors	One visitor in addition to Birth Partner in room for a max of 60 min. Siblings and all other visitors. Siblings may visit with adult supervision
Emergency Department (BMC/SEF/FVH)	One healthy screened visitor	All hours	One visitor allowed per patient in the treatment room with the patient

General Visitation: Inpatient Areas (Patients With COVID-19)

Patient Population	Visitors	Hours/Duration	Notes
COVID-19 Adult	Video visits only	All hours	Exceptions made relating to end-of-life discussions and care.
COVID-19 Pediatric	One healthy guardian	All hours	

General Visitation: Outpatient Area

Patient Population	Visitors	Hours/Duration	Notes
Ambulatory Clinics/Services	No general visitation	Clinic hours	One healthy, screened caregiver is allowed.
Cancer Center/Infusion	No general visitation	Clinic hours	One healthy, screened caregiver is allowed.
Outpatient Surgery/Procedures	One healthy adult visitor	While surgery is in progress	Visitors may accompany patient to dept. for drop off. Visitor may wait in surgical waiting room during surgery.
Outpatient Services (Laboratory, Radiology, etc.)	One healthy adult visitor	While test is in progress	Visitors may wait in department waiting room.

Exceptions for Inpatient, Emergency Department, Birth Center, Surgery and Ambulatory Visiting (Necessary Visitation)

- Visits to patients who are at the end of life (as determined by the attending physician), on comfort care, or are being discharged to hospice as their next level of care. Max of 4 visitors together, at the discretion of the nursing director.
- Visits by anyone who is legally authorized to make decisions for the patient, whether by a durable power of attorney (DPOA), conservatorship, or in the role of a surrogate decision-maker as recognized by the care provider team for patients who lack decisional capacity.
- Care giver for patients with cognitive impairment or other neurological injury (such as stroke) or for patients who have developed hospital delirium or dementia, where the consistent presence of the visitor is necessary to reduce the risk of medical or clinical harm.
- Care giver for patients who require assistance because of developmental disabilities, physical disabilities or limitations, or cognitive impairment.
- Visits by family and legal advisers to update a patient's will or other legal papers.
- Unique visiting situations should be discussed with the on-site nursing director.

Additional Exception: Birth Center (Labor & Delivery/Maternity)

- Doulas will be allowed in addition to the birth partner for all Birth Center patients, while patient is in labor (subject to change based on COVID-19 surge status).

Additional Exceptions: Inpatient Stay and Come-and-Go Surgeries

- Visits by anyone who is legally authorized to make decisions for the patient, whether by operation of a DPOA or conservatorship, or in the role of a surrogate decision-maker as recognized by the care provider team for patients who lack decisional capacity.
- Care giver for patients with physical or developmental disabilities who require assistance (for example, patients with severe hearing loss, dementia or aphasia and patients who are wheelchair-bound or have a left ventricular assist device).
- Minors (less than 18) are allowed two adult visitor.
- In situations where face-to-face caregiving instructions would benefit the patient, a family member or support person may be present during the discharge instruction. One care partner allowed at discharge to support transportation and post care instructions.
- Surgical patients of the Crane Center, Fairview Hospital Same Day Surgery or North Adams Same Day Surgery may be accompanied by a caregiver or support person who is their source of transportation.

Additional Exceptions: Ambulatory Clinic Appointments

- All patients with an appointment in clinic may be accompanied to pre-operative services by a caregiver. (This is not limited to patients under age 18, because older patients may have developmental issues that require a caregiver.)

Cancer Center Visiting (Necessary Visitation)

- Caregivers are allowed *only* if screened negative for symptoms of illness, due to the risk of exposure for patients, medical providers, and staff.
- We recognize how challenging it is to receive medical care for cancer and that sometimes it's essential for a caregiver to accompany you to an appointment. Please contact your care navigator to discuss your request, so we can work with you.

Information for Families of All Patients in Our Hospitals

- Patients and loved ones must designate a single individual to be the point of contact for all information and conversations with the health care team.
- The designated point of contact will be responsible for sharing information with family members or loved ones who should have this information.
- The designated point of contact will hear from the care team should the patient's condition or treatment change significantly.

Virtual Visit Assistance

We encourage virtual visits through video applications such as Zoom and FaceTime on your computer or portable device. If assistance is needed, a representative from our Patient Experience Department or Nursing will work with you and your loved one to facilitate a virtual visit.

For more information

Berkshire Medical Center

Contact the BMC Patient Experience Department:

Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

*Please contact the Nursing House Supervisor for assistance during other hours.

Phone: (413) 447-2466

Email: BMCPatientExperience@bhs1.org

Fairview Hospital

Call Fairview Hospital (413) 528-0790 and ask for the nursing unit where the patient is located to arrange for Virtual Visit Assistance.