



## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL PATIENTS AND VISITORS:

### VMH Healthcare COVID-19 Modified Visitation Policy Effective Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Vernon Memorial Healthcare continues to evaluate its COVID-19 precautions to ensure a safe place to work and receive care. We have the following visitation policy in place for the hospital, all clinics, and the emergency department.

#### **Prohibited visitation**

- Visitors experiencing or having experienced any COVID-19 symptoms within the last 2 days are not permitted—even if the visitor is the primary support person and/or healthcare decision maker:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Muscle/body aches
  - New loss of sense of taste or smell
- Connectivity will be made via telephone to support patient and provide decisions.
- Visitors who have had a diagnosis of COVID-19 in the last 10 days or who have been told to quarantine OR who have had known exposure within 14 days are not permitted.
- Patients who are COVID+ and hospitalized may not have a visitor.
  - Exceptions:
    - Patients <18 years of age
    - Patients giving birth
    - Patients at end of life (as determined by VMH)
    - Patients clinically unable to participate in their care

#### **Expectations for all permitted visitors**

- Must pass entrance screening (exception: COVID+ adult accompanying a minor if no alternative support person available/appropriate).
- Visitors are always required to cover their nose and mouth with a face covering. **This is without exception.** Visitors who cannot tolerate a personal face covering will not be allowed to visit. Signage is posted to provide guidance on acceptable face coverings.
- Visitors must respect social distancing (maintain six feet of separation between themselves and others) even when wearing a face covering.
- Visitors should visit in the patient's room and plan to remain in the patient's room for the duration of the visit.
  - Exceptions:
    - If there is an aerosolizing procedure or visitors are directed out of the room by staff, at that time the visitor would be directed to an internal waiting space.
    - Visitors may also leave the patient's room to access the cafeteria.
- Frequent hand hygiene should be performed by all visitors. Hand hygiene may include washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub.
- If Support person becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms, they should leave and contact the Respiratory Clinic for appropriate screening including possible testing. They can identify an alternate support person or wait for test results. They may return when test result is negative or appropriate quarantine period has elapsed.
- COVID+ patients (OB and Pediatric) – the support person must wear a mask and face shield and stay in room. Meal trays can be purchased and delivered to patient room.

Please see the tables on the following pages for additional information respective to our different VMH facilities.

If you have questions, contact your VMH clinic or the VMH hospital.

ALL AREAS		
Reason	Support Persons Allowed	Location
Department of Corrections/Jail patient	Number of security/law enforcement officers accompanying a patient is based on state regulations and these individuals will be allowed to enter	All areas
Government employee presenting on official business	Government officials can carry out professional duties; although many have shifted to a virtual model, presenting officials should not be barred from entry	All areas

CLINICS and HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT SERVICES		
Reason	Support Persons Allowed	Location
Clinic and Hospital Outpatient Appointments: Adult and Pediatric Patients	2 Support Persons 16 years of age or older  <i>For pediatric patients:</i> Siblings can accompany patients appointments. Scheduling personnel are encouraged to softly ask families to make other arrangements for siblings.	All Family Practice Clinics and Hospital Outpatient Service Locations
Clinic: Pediatric children in foster care and visits involving Child Protective Services	2 Support Persons 16 years of age or older	All Family Practice Clinics and Hospital Outpatient Service Locations
Evaluation for COVID-19 (i.e., fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle/body aches, new loss of sense of taste or smell)	No support person, unless patient is under 18 years of age or needs physical assistance with transfers/activities of daily living	Respiratory Clinic Space

HOSPITAL		
Reason	Support Persons Allowed	Location
In this section, the support person(s) will be the same individuals throughout the duration of the stay (see allowed exception for End of Life care).		
Emergency and Urgent Care Services	2 Support Persons 16 years of age or older. COVID+ and/or End of Life will follow the same guidelines as Hospitalized patients below.	Emergency Department
Outpatient surgery, inpatient surgery, and/or other procedures occurring in the operating suites	2 Support Persons 16 years of age or older.  May visit pre- and post-operatively in the ambulatory surgery area. During surgery, please make plans to leave the building.	Surgery
Hospitalized Patients (Adults and Pediatric)	2 Support Persons 16 years of age or older	Hospital Observation and Inpatient
COVID+ Hospitalized Adult (18+) COVID+ Hospitalized Obstetrics	<b>No</b> Support Persons.  Obstetric patients may have 1 Support Person. See "Expectations for All Permitted Visitors" re: COVID+ patients	Hospital Observation and Inpatient Units- Emergency Department
COVID+ Hospitalized Peds (17 years of age and younger)	1 Support Person 18 years of age or older. See "Expectations for All Permitted Visitors" re: COVID+ patients	Hospital Observation and Inpatient Units- Emergency Department
Hospital End of Life (Determined by VMH)	Up to 3 Support Persons <b>at one time</b> , 16 years of age or older.	Hospital Observation and Inpatient Units- Emergency Department
COVID+ Hospital End of Life (Determined by VMH)	1 Support Person every 24 hours. Support persons should be 18 years of age or older.	Hospital Observation and Inpatient Units- Emergency Department

This situation is evolving; we appreciate your patience and support as we work through these complex decisions. Ultimately, all restrictions that are being put in place are for the safety of you, our patients, and the communities we serve. The above policy has been approved by the Administrative Team, if there is a discretionary need for an exception in the Hospital setting, the Charge Nurse has the authority to make that determination.

Please use communication methods available to you (e.g., phones, FaceTime, Skype, etc.) to keep in contact with patients whenever possible.

Stay updated on VMH COVID-19 preparedness updates by visiting [www.vmh.org](http://www.vmh.org) or following us on Facebook.