



Visitor Guidelines

North Country Healthcare and its affiliates place the highest priority on the health and safety of our patients and staff. Visitor guidelines are continually evolving to protect our patients, caregivers, and employees while balancing the importance of being with friends and family. These guidelines apply to patients who are seen in any NCH affiliate hospital or outpatient care area. NCH affiliates reserve the right to evaluate each case individually. Certain affiliates may have minor differences based on the specific needs of their respective patient population. Guidelines will be reassessed and adjusted based upon the most up-to-date information and recommended best practices for limiting the spread of COVID-19. We appreciate your understanding as we work to keep our patients, their families and our staff safe as the pandemic continues.

“Visitors” are considered those who seek to access an NCH facility and who are not directly involved in the care of patients as outlined here but who wish to socialize with and support a patient. Visitors must be at least 12 years of age. Visitors are not allowed to visit any area in the hospital except the specific location in which they are seeing a patient - they may not access the gift shop, cafeteria or other lobbies.

We are permitting selective access to NCH facilities for visitors (as described below).

Important Note Regarding Exception for Patients with Disabilities

Patients with disabilities such as significant physical disabilities or intellectual or cognitive disabilities may require the presence of a family member, personal care assistant, or similar disability service provider knowledgeable about the management of the patient’s care and/or able to assist physically or emotionally during the patient’s hospitalization. This will be permitted, and limited to one designated support person. Any restriction outlined below will not apply in this circumstance. The designated support person must comply with the requirements outlined below for all caregivers, all of which are aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19.

Guidelines

It is important to note that individual departments, sections, or units may have additional constraints or requirements beyond these guidelines, based on the need to maintain patient and staff health and safety. Patients and caregivers should contact the specific department or unit if there are questions.

- All visitors must be without any COVID-19 symptoms and successfully pass our symptom screening before entering a building. This screening will include a series of questions and temperature check. Any visitor who has symptoms of COVID-19 will not be permitted in the building.

- Visitors can expect to be screened every time they enter an NCH building. They will be required to wear a surgical mask which will be provided. The mask must adequately cover the nose and mouth at all times while inside the facility.

Emergency Department

With the following exceptions, visitors are not allowed to accompany patients to the Emergency Department, at this time: pediatric Emergency Department patients will be permitted one parent/caregiver; any patient with a disability, as indicated above, will be permitted one visitor/caregiver. Any visitor will be required to pass entry screening and wear a mask at all times.

Outpatient Appointments- including Laboratory, Imaging Services, Cardiopulmonary, Rehabilitation Services (PT, OT, ST), Cardiac Rehabilitation, Occupational Health, Wound Care. Adult patients who do not require a caregiver, as defined above, should attend their outpatient appointments alone. Visitors are **not being allowed** to accompany patients during outpatient visits to the physician practices at this time with the exception of a parent/guardian who is accompanying a minor.

Outpatient Procedures

No visitors will be allowed with independent adult patients. However, all patients receiving anesthesia will require a responsible adult driver. The driver will drop the patient at the entrance prior to procedure and will be notified by phone when the patient is ready for discharge. At the time of discharge, instructions may be reviewed with the driver over the phone, if requested. For minors and/or patients requiring a caregiver, a caregiver/parent/guardian (only one person) will be screened at entrance doors, will be required to stay in the patient room for the entire surgical visit and must wear an appropriate mask during his/her time in the building.

Oncology Patients

All patients may have one visitor with them when they meet with their physician for consultation. After that period of time, staff will advise the visitors when the patient will be done with their treatment or testing and can be picked up, if a driver is needed. Visitors shall not be allowed to remain in the infusion area or waiting room.

Adult Inpatients

Inpatient visitation is not permitted at this time. Virtual visits are encouraged, and we are happy to assist with them.

Obstetrics (OB) – Labor, Delivery & Post-partum Care

One caregiver or partner may be present through labor, delivery and post-partum care. We are happy to assist with virtual visits and highly encourage them as a way to involve other family members and friends. Siblings, grandparents, and other visitors are not permitted. OB/GYN visits in other outpatient clinical settings may have additional constraints or requirements based on local policies and space limitations.

Pediatrics Inpatient Care

As space and other conditions permit, pediatric patients may have up to two adult primary caregivers (parents or legal guardians only, space permitting) with them. During hospitalization, the two designated caregivers should be the same two people to the greatest extent possible. No other visitors or siblings will be allowed.

Inpatients Receiving End-of-Life Care (e.g., Comfort Measures Only (CMO)), at Risk of Imminent Death

Assuming the patient is not COVID-19 positive or under investigation for COVID-19, two family members/friends may visit at a time. The determination that a patient meets these criteria will be made by the provider or House Coordinator and is subject to change based on the patient's clinical condition. As with any visitors, they must pass screening and wear a mask while in the building.