



# COVID-19 Public hospital visitor guidelines

**These guidelines apply during the COVID-19 response, from 12:01am Monday 12 July 2021, until advised otherwise by the Government of Western Australia.**

## Background

This is a guide for health professionals in public health services. This guideline will continue to be updated as other COVID-19 measures and restrictions change to protect the population from the spread of COVID-19.

Mental Health Advocates are not considered visitors and have a statutory right to access mental health units under the Mental Health Act 2014.

## Key COVID-19 messaging for all visitors entering a hospital

All visitors entering a hospital environment should adhere to key government recommendations and any additional hospital instructions with regards to COVID-19.

Visitors should not be permitted to enter a hospital if they have:

- a current diagnosis of COVID-19;
- a fever or a cold or a flu-like illness, including symptoms such as sore throat, cough, fatigue and difficulty breathing;
- returned to WA and are required to self-quarantine for 14 days;
- been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and are therefore required to self-isolate for 14 days; or
- been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting test results.

*For exemptions: see below for exceptional circumstances.*

Any visitor to a hospital who does not comply with the above requirements may be required to leave the hospital immediately.

Each hospital in WA has site-specific guidance on the number of visitors and visiting hours. Please refer to their websites for specific details.

Some hospitals may be undertaking visitor screening i.e. asking you if you are currently well, questioning you for any symptoms, and/or taking your temperature. Refusal to support this process may result in declined entry.

All visitors are expected to keep patients safe by maintaining good personal hygiene and physical distancing where possible:

- Wash hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or cough into your inner elbow.
- Encourage safe physical distancing of 1.5 metres between each other.

## Staying socially connected in hospital during COVID-19

Where possible, staff should discuss and support alternative means of communication for people who would otherwise visit patients, such as virtual communications including phone and video-communication.

### Visitors to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 inpatients

To protect the population, including hospital staff, from the spread of COVID-19, the following guidance applies to visiting **inpatients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19**, subject to a case by case risk assessment and visitor approval process:

- Adults – Visitors may be allowed where visitation has been agreed to with hospital staff and the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team.
- Maternity – One immediate family member may be present during and immediately following birth as a support person.
- Children – A maximum of one designated family member/guardian is able to visit per day. This must be the same person each day. In circumstances where the designated person is unable to attend, an alternative person can be agreed upon. In exceptional circumstances, more than one immediate family member/guardian can visit in agreement with staff.
- Neonates – A maximum of two designated family members/guardians are able to visit per day and adhere to local hospital advice. These must be the same people each day. In circumstances where a designated person is unable to attend, an alternative person can be agreed upon.
- Patients requiring end-of-life care – The individual hospital will consider visitors on compassionate grounds on a case-by-case basis.
- Individual hospitals may allow visitors if a patient's room has a viewing window where curtains can be opened to enable a visitor and patient to interact safely.

Approved visitors/support persons must abide by the specific directions and instructions of hospital staff and the IPC team, for example the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when visiting. See [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in WA Healthcare Facilities](#) for further advice.

### Exceptional circumstances to visitor restrictions

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the application of these visitor guidelines should be reconsidered. All exceptional circumstances will be considered in discussion with hospital staff and the IPC team and will:

- Be determined on a case-by-case basis and consider individual circumstances; and
- Include an assessment of the risks and benefits to all individuals involved.

## Visitors who are in mandatory quarantine

1. Those who are in mandatory quarantine are subject to the requirements of Directions issued under the *Emergency Management Act 2005 (WA)* and will require permission to leave quarantine and pre approval of the health care facility (HCF) to visit a patient.
2. Visitors who are in mandatory self-quarantine will be considered on a case-by-case basis on compassionate grounds. Visitors who are currently subject to **self-quarantine** but have been granted permission to visit an inpatient on compassionate grounds must notify the HCF prior to visiting.
3. Visitors in **hotel quarantine** will be subject to approval process in place via the Hotel Quarantine system and hospitals will be contacted in advance.

### All approved visitors from self-quarantine or hotel quarantine:

- Approved visitors are to abide by the specific directions and instructions of hospital staff and the IPC team. Instructions may include: being met at the HCF entrance and escorted to the patient room. The visitor is to be instructed on donning of PPE that may include a gown, surgical mask, protective eyewear and gloves. Strict adherence to hand hygiene procedures during the doffing procedure must be observed.
- All quarantine visitors must wear a mask at all times once they have left their quarantine accommodation. The HCF must consult their IPC team for management of these visits.
- Where possible, visitors under quarantine are not to visit a patient in a shared room.
- No visitor to a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case can visit other patients or common areas within the HCF such as cafeterias and are to be escorted off the premises at the end of their visit.

See [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in WA Healthcare Facilities](#) for further advice.

Version:	Last reviewed:	Changes:
5.0	12 July 2021	Visitor restrictions amended as per Government of Western Australia guidance.

### Authority

Department of Health Western Australia.

These guidelines are for staff working in public hospitals in Western Australia. They are based on information available at the time of writing and may change as more information becomes available. These guidelines are a guide only and patients should be managed on a case-by-case basis.

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.**

© Department of Health 2021