



## **Long Term Care & Rural Health Family Presence Family and Visitor Questions and Answers**

### **1. Why does Western Health have flexible visiting hours?**

Research shows that visits from family and friends are important supports to patients during their hospital stay; they help to reduce anxiety and isolation and to improve healing and recovery.

Encouraging family presence means that we want to invite patients/residents and families to become more engaged in care. We ask that you discuss your visiting plans when possible with your loved one's care team to determine what times will work best for everyone.

### **2. How does visiting at night work?**

Depending on the room, visitors may be unable to stay at the patient's/resident's bedside overnight and may be requested to stay in the unit lounge. Nursing staff will alert the family member if the patient/resident requires assistance overnight if that is what the patient/resident and visitors request. Any request to stay at night may need to be coordinated as there may be more than one request for a particular evening.

### **3. How many visitors are allowed?**

We must balance the wishes and needs of all patients/residents and families in each room *and* allow for patient care. The appropriate number of visitors at any time for each patient/resident can be determined with the care team. If a room is overcrowded (this is determined by the care team caring for the patient(s)/resident(s)), we must consider the safety of our patients/residents and staff and some family members may be asked to wait in the unit lounge or common spaces in the facility (i.e. family lounge, cafeteria or chapel).

### **4. What about children?**

Children less than 14 years old are welcome in most areas of the hospital but must be directly supervised by an adult who is not the patient/resident. Units with immunocompromised patients/residents might need to restrict visits by children in order to protect the patient/resident and the child's health. Please check with your care team if unsure.

## **5. What if the care team needs to provide care?**

Family and friends may be asked to wait in the waiting area while the care team provides care. However, sometimes family may ask or be asked to stay so they can better understand the care needed for their loved one after discharge.

## **6. Are any areas of the health center/home exempt from this policy?**

Providing care for your loved one is our top priority so that we can support them in healing and recovery. Often, this means encouraging family presence. Sometimes, it means we may need to restrict the length of visits or the number of visitors. This will be determined through discussion between the care team, the patient/resident, and the family.

## **7. What about visitors in rooms where there are multiple beds?**

We must balance the wishes and needs of all patients/residents in the room. Visiting may be interrupted to provide care, to protect the privacy of others or to maintain safety and security. If a room is overcrowded, some family members may be asked to wait in the waiting area.

## **8. Are there any other reasons a family or visitor may be asked to leave?**

Family and friends who have a negative impact on the patients'/residents' or other patients'/residents' health and well-being may be asked to postpone their visit or leave the room/area. This occurs in discussion with the patient/resident, their family/partners in care and the care team.

Disruptive behavior or unsafe practices are not tolerated. This includes but is not limited to: alcohol or illicit drug use; foul language; aggressive or disrespectful behavior to the care team, patients/residents or other family members, or property etc.

## **9. Can my pet visit?**

Personal dog and cat visitation can be arranged through discussion with the care team and family. The potential risks and advantages must be considered when allowing animals into the healthcare setting including: space limitations, infectious risk, allergies, phobias, and animal caused injuries.

Based on these risks, pet visitation may need to occur in an alternate location or be denied. If accommodations are unable to be made at a given time, it can be revisited at a later time.