

Covid-19 Visitor Policy

At Heart of America Medical Center, we know that visitors play a vital role in helping patients recover or helping patients attend important appointments. However, in light of the public health challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19), we have adopted policies designed to balance the needs of patients while ensuring the safest possible conditions for anyone using our facilities. Our highest priority is the health and safety of our patients, employees, and everyone who visits our facilities. We are taking every precaution recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and are reviewing and updating our protocols and guidelines constantly. We need and appreciate your support in meeting these challenges.

Visitors Allowed Entrance

- Visitors will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, sore throat, new onset of loss of taste or smell, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, or diarrhea) and will have a temperature check performed upon entrance. A log of their information will be kept.
- Any visitor who is coughing or shows other signs of illness will be asked to leave.
- A well-fitting cloth mask or face mask covering the mouth and nose will be required except on babies and children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, is incapacitated or is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Children over the age of 2 will wear a mask unless the child has an underlying medical condition that puts them at risk of severe illness; in that case the child should stay at least 6 feet away from the patient.
- Hand Hygiene must be performed upon entrance and exit to the facility and at any other time deemed necessary.

For Upcoming Office-Based Appointments and Outpatient Locations

- One person is allowed to accompany each patient to an appointment unless additional assistance is required.
- If the patient or visitor has cold or flu-like symptoms (COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, sore throat, new onset of loss of taste or smell, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, or diarrhea), please consult with the clinic staff by phone before any upcoming appointments.
- If you are symptom-free, your appointments will continue as planned.
- A well-fitting cloth mask or face mask covering the mouth and nose will be required except on babies and children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, is incapacitated or is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Children over the age of 2 will wear a mask unless the child has an underlying medical condition that puts them at risk of severe illness; in that case the child should stay at least 6 feet away from the patient.
- Hand Hygiene must be performed upon entrance and exit to the facility and at any other time deemed necessary.

For Emergency Department Visitation

- One to two visitors/support persons are permitted per patient, unless disallowed by the hospital according to the patient's condition, circumstances, or hospital policy.

For Inpatient Visitors

- Visitors will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, sore throat, new onset of loss of taste or smell, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, or diarrhea) and will have a temperature check performed upon entrance. A log of their information will be kept.
- A well-fitting cloth mask or face mask covering the mouth and nose will be required except on babies and children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, is incapacitated or is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Children over the age of 2 will wear a mask unless the child has an underlying medical condition that puts them at risk of severe illness; in that case the child should stay at least 6 feet away from the patient.
- Hand Hygiene must be performed upon entrance and exit to the facility and the patient's room.
- No more than two visitors will be allowed at one time for up to 60-minute visits. The time allowed may be changed according to the patient's condition, circumstances, or hospital policy. In cases where children are allowed to visit, such as compassionate care or end of life situations, they must be supervised by a responsible adult and be able to wear a face mask without adult supervision.
- Visitors are to remain in the room of the patient they are visiting.
- During widespread community transmission of COVID-19 or positive cases in the acute care setting, visitor access may be restricted. Only visitors essential for helping to provide patient care and/or caring for pediatric patients may be allowed. Essential visitors are to wear a face mask to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the facility from pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals. (Visitors should only visit the patient they are caring for and should not go to other locations in the facility.)
- Pediatric patients may have two designated support persons with them.

Visiting Hours: 9:00am-9:00pm, but the time may vary at the facilities discretion.

Patients with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

- Patients with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and patients with cognitive impairments including dementia may designate one support person to remain with them through their hospitalization. An additional visitor may also be with the patient during hospital designated visiting hours.

COVID Positive Patient

- No visitors are allowed unless in special circumstances such as, Pediatrics, End of Life, and Compassionate Care.

End of Life or Compassionate Care situations

- Two support persons may remain with patients in imminent end-of-life or compassionate care situations.

Ambulatory Surgery

- Patients undergoing same day procedures may be accompanied to the facility by a companion, and that companion may remain in the hospital designated waiting area until patient is discharged, unless disallowed by the hospital according to the patient's condition, circumstances, or hospital policy.
- Parents/support persons may be present during pediatric procedures, with patients who have an intellectual, developmental, or other cognitive disabilities, or under other situations as authorized by the hospital, depending on the patient's status and condition.

Care Center, Assisted Living, Basic Care

- During periods of infectious outbreaks when there is no general visitation permitted, visitations will be in accordance with current CMS directives, CDC recommendations, or as directed by North Dakota Department of Health. Visits will be held outdoors whenever practicable and will be facilitated routinely barring weather conditions, resident's health, or the facility's outbreak status. Indoor visitation will be conducted in a manner that reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission. All visitors will wear a face mask and physically distance from other visitors, employees, or residents regardless of vaccination status. The facility will ensure that visits are maintained at the designated visitation area.
- Before allowing indoor visitation, the risks associated with visitation should be explained to residents and their visitors so they can make an informed decision about participation. Fully vaccinated residents can choose to have close contact with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand hygiene before and after. If both the resident and their visitor(s) are fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) and to not wear source control ONLY while alone in the resident's room or designated visitation room.
- Indoor visitation for unvaccinated residents should be limited solely to compassionate care situations if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is >10% and < 70% of the residents in the facility are fully vaccinated.
- The facility will have no more than 2 visitors per resident for indoor visits and no more than 4 simultaneous scheduled visits (including indoor and outdoor visits) occurring at the same time. Indoor visits will be limited to 60 minutes.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

https://www.who.int/csr/bioriskreduction/infection_control/publication/en/

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPPE_use-2020.1-eng.pdf