

## Patient Safety and Visiting Hours

Safety is always at the forefront of all patient care activities at SFMH. Patient safety also informs all policy development and decision-making including our Visitor Policy which is designed to promote a safe and healing environment. To do this, it is critical to balance the therapeutic benefits experienced by patients who receive visitors with the need to preserve confidentiality and ensure a safe environment.

“To provide optimal patient care, and for confidentiality purposes, we need to have set times of the day where there is no one else but the health care team on the unit. However, we also know that visitors play a very important role in the patient’s well-being,” says Janet Lynch, RN.

Visiting guidelines also help with infection prevention and control for both patients and visitors and we ask that everyone comply.

Visitors are welcome during our regular visiting hours from 11:00 to 8:00 p.m. daily, with a maximum of three visitors at a time. Special exemptions are in place for palliative care patients and children. More detailed visiting information is posted under Visitor Information on the SFMH website at [www.sfmhosp.com](http://www.sfmhosp.com).

Patient safety is a priority in all aspects of operations at SFMH.

“As we prepare for 2013 accreditation, many required organizational practices for patient safety must be met,” says Joan Kuiack, SFMH Director of Patient Care Services, noting that SFMH has developed documentation to clarify key safety messages for our patients.

Staff has worked hard to develop and implement patient admission booklets, emergency department handouts, safety brochures and discharge instructions, as well as an Eight Steps to a Safer Hospital Visit poster.

Our efforts to improve upon and add to patient safety is ongoing. All patient suggestions and surveys are reviewed and discussed looking at areas for improvement.

Working together and becoming familiar with our safety messages is one way of ensuring faster, more efficient care.

The message includes knowing your current list of medications and allergies. “Have this information written out and keep it with you at all times,” notes Kuiack.

The importance of proper hand hygiene to help prevent the spread of germs to you and to those around you is also stressed. Gwen Brown, SFMH’s Infection Control Coordinator, points out the four moments of hand hygiene:

1. Before and after patient contact
2. Before aseptic procedures
3. After body fluid exposure risk
4. Before and after contact with patient’s environment (bedside table, bed rails, door knobs etc.)

Hand washing or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers—especially when cold and flu season is upon us — is extremely important to reduce the risk of spreading infections. Hand sanitizer stations are conveniently located throughout the hospital.

Brown recommends that whether you are visiting the hospital or not, it is good practice to wash your hands often with soap and rub for 15 seconds, covering all of the surfaces. Rinse off the soap and gently blot with a towel.

Other safety measures at SFMH include a falls prevention program that assesses each patient’s risk upon admission. Patients who don’t feel stable enough to move on their own should wait for one of our staff members to assist. Visitors should always check with the care team before assisting patients.

For the comfort and safety of patients, visitors and staff, SFMH is both a scent-free and smoke-free environment. Complete guidelines for patients are provided in the Patient Safety section of the SFMH website. As well, all members of the SFMH team are available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for partnering with SFMH in the provision of best practice care to all of our patients.



Ralph Elie of Killaloe visits his mother Agnes most days during SFMH’s regular visiting hours.