



St. Francis Memorial Hospital News Release

SFMH reminds patients and visitors to observe Visiting Policies

In order to protect patients' health and safety, St. Francis Memorial Hospital is reminding both patients and visitors that they must follow the hospital's Visiting Policies.

Although infection control is always a top priority at SFMH, the hospital is particularly concerned about the spread of seasonal flu and other infectious diseases in the winter months. This winter has seen a spike in the spread of these diseases across Canada, which has led health institutions to increase their vigilance for the protection of those most vulnerable to infection—hospital patients and elderly.

“Our first priority is patient safety and well-being,” Joan Kuiack, Director of Patient Care Services, said in a recent hospital memo about the Visiting Policies. “Please assist us in securing a safe environment in which people can heal and recuperate. We ask for your assistance in decreasing the spread of infection for everyone’s well-being.”

The SFMH Visiting Policies outline the hospital’s visiting hours, the number of visitors allowed, visitor hygiene and hand washing protocol, as well as rules for child visitors among other things.

These are some of the policies:

- Regular visiting hours are now from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. However, individual circumstances are considered and may alert the visiting times. Staff may also ask visitors to step out of the room when nursing care is required or if access to the room for cleaning is needed.
- Patients and visitors must respect neighbouring patients and keep distractions to an absolute minimum. The hospital also asks that family and friends do not overtire their loved ones. For the safety of all patients, visitors are not permitted to visit if they have symptoms of fever, rash, cough, sneezing, sore throat, runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, or have had recent contact with someone who has a transmittable disease or unvaccinated children who have had recent exposure to someone with chickenpox.

- There can be a maximum of two visitors per patient, and all children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult.
- Patients in isolation should have only one visitor at a time and a maximum of two per day, and those visitors must report to the nurse's station before entering the patient's room to get information on how to protect themselves during their visit.

Hand hygiene is another important aspect of SFMH's Visiting Policies.

"Hand sanitizer stations are conveniently located throughout the hospital; you can't miss them. They are affixed to the walls as you enter the building. Kindly stop and rub the cleansing gel over your entire hands when you walk in and before you leave," said Kuiack.