

Guidance for visitor screening, masking, and restrictions during coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

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BJC HealthCare is committed to the health and safety of our patients, families and community. We recognize the role loved ones play in the healing process and are committed to providing our patients with an environment that is both warm and supportive, and safely designed to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

BJC HealthCare, in cooperation with the other regional health care systems through the **Regional Pandemic Task Force**, has developed a set of tiered visitor guidelines, which can be scaled to the fluid risk of COVID-19 spread in the community. The tiers enable transparency and consistency throughout the region, and a nimble means to adapt as the risk level changes.

BJC will allow full visitation to resume when the threat of COVID-19 lessens.

Patients are encouraged to have **Virtual Visitors** through phone calls, FaceTime and other virtual methods. In cases where patients are unable to do so on their own, the care team will help facilitate virtual visits through the **BJC Virtual Visitor Program**.

Children younger than age 12 will not be permitted except under extraordinary circumstances.

Tier designation will be recommended by the Visitor Policy Review Team and Infection Prevention (IP) with final approval from the Incident Command Center (ICC). Recommendations will be based on ongoing current state assessments including overall case rates in the community, hospital COVID census numbers, and overall hospital census numbers.

Below is an outline of the three tiers of risk and the associated visitor policy accommodations.

Tiered threat level	Tier 1 High Risk	Tier 2 Medium Risk	Tier 3 Low Risk
VISITOR LIMITATIONS			
Emergency Department	No visitor except for compassionate care and medical necessity	1 designated visitor per adult ED patient; 2 designated visitors per pediatric ED patient	TBD
Inpatient	No visitor except for compassionate care and medical necessity	2 designated visitors per day; designated person can change day to day	TBD
Outpatient Surgery/Procedure	1 designated visitor in the waiting room	1 dedicated visitor* in the waiting room <i>*See "Exceptions" document</i>	TBD
Clinical appointment	1 visitor for compassionate care and medical necessity	1 support person/caregiver who can participate in exam room questions and care	TBD
Post Acute Care	Refer to the individual post acute care setting	Refer to the individual post acute care setting	TBD
Obstetrics	2 designated visitors per patient per day; must be the same visitors through the duration of the stay	2 designated visitors per patient per day; visitors can change day to day	TBD

Tiered threat level	Tier 1 High Risk	Tier 2 Medium Risk	Tier 3 Low Risk
VISITOR LIMITATIONS			
Pediatrics	2 designated visitors; must be the same visitors through the duration of the stay. For the purposes of visitation, pediatric patients are defined as patients under 21 years of age.	2 designated visitors, compassionate care exceptions for siblings may apply; must be the same visitors through the duration of the stay. For the purposes of visitation, pediatric patients are defined as patients under 21 years of age.	TBD
Nursery and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)	2 designated visitors; must be the same visitors through the duration of the stay	2 designated visitors; must be the same visitors through the duration of the stay	TBD
Confirmed or suspected COVID-19	No visitors except for compassionate care and medical necessity; must be the same visitor throughout the duration of the stay except at end of life	Up to 2 designated visitors aged 18 or older per stay in inpatient and ICU settings only, with one allowed at the bedside per day; visitors may not swap throughout the day.	TBD
End-of-Life	2 visitors at the bedside at a time; visitors may switch out throughout the day, for as long as the clinical team deems that it is safe and feasible.	2 visitors at the bedside at a time; visitors may switch out throughout the day, for as long as the clinical team deems that it is safe and feasible.	TBD

Please see page 3 for compassionate care and medical necessity exceptions.

Each BJC facility shall appoint someone in a formal leadership position to evaluate requests from the clinical care teams for additional exceptions to these visitor restrictions.

Compassionate care and medical necessity exceptions for Tier 1 or COVID-19 suspected or confirmed patients include:

- Obstetric patients may have two designated visitors in inpatient and ICU settings for the duration of the inpatient stay; one patient is permitted at the bedside per day.
- Nursery and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) patients may have two designated visitors, who must remain in the patient room for the duration of the visit.
- Patients who are at end-of-life may have two visitors at the bedside at a time. Visitors may switch out throughout the day, for as long as the clinical team deems that it is safe and feasible.
- Visitors for end-of-life patients in semi-private rooms are asked to close privacy partitions and may be asked to wait outside the room to control room capacity or during procedures.
- Patients who require complicated patient or caregiver education prior to discharge may have one designated visitor attend the discharge education session if education cannot be provided through any other mechanisms.
- Pediatric patients may have two designated visitors on the inpatient units. For the purposes of visitation, pediatric patients are defined as patients under 21 years of age.
- Patients with behavioral health, developmental delays or altered mental status, or physical dependencies or limitations, for whom a family member or caregiver is integral to their care or safety, may have one visitor. Altered mental status resulting from medication-induced sedation in an intensive care unit setting is not included in this exception.
- Clinical appointments for which a patient meets any of the above exception criteria or has other complex patient factors may have one visitor.

Visitors will not be permitted if:

- They have signs or symptoms of acute illness (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sudden loss of taste and/or smell, sore throat, body aches, diarrhea or vomiting).
- They have had recent contact (<14 days) with someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 unless visiting a COVID-19 patient.
- They have tested positive for COVID-19 within last 14 days.
- They are not willing to comply with the masking policy.

Expectations for Visitors

- Undergo temperature and symptom screening upon building (or department) entry.
- Wear a mask upon building entry and while inside the facility. (Visitors meeting exceptions for COVID-19/PUI patients must wear additional PPE – gowns, gloves, eye protection.)
- Remain in the patient’s room for the duration of the visit, with temporary exceptions to visit the cafeteria, chapel, restroom, etc., provided they return directly to the patient’s room.
- Notify the care team upon arrival to and from the unit.
- Leave the room during nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen collection or aerosol-generating procedures.
- Perform hand hygiene at point of wellness screening and upon entry/exit of the patient’s room.
- Notify the clinical care team if signs or symptoms of illness develop during visit.
- Adhere to facility visiting hours.

HOME CARE SERVICES

Guidance for staff and patients for areas with an order to remain at home

- During stay at home and “shelter in place” orders, we may experience an increasing number of family members and visitors in our patients’ homes. Prior to visits, please instruct patients and families on the need for social distancing, limiting non-essential visitors in the home, and promoting good hand washing.
- Social distancing protects our patients and staff from the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing is the act of deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Staying at least six feet away from other people lessens the risk of coming into contact with droplets containing COVID-19.
- We also have our standard PPE & precautions, equipment cleaning practices, and use of barriers in the home that accompany this updated guidance.