

How to Have a Safe Hospital Visit With a Loved One Who Has or May Have COVID-19

Exception to the Visitor Policy

It is important for you to visit with your loved one during this difficult time. Allina Health made an exception to its visitor policy so you can be in the room with your loved one.

Use this information to learn how you can protect yourself and others during and after your visit.

Your Exposure Risk

Your loved one has a special health status known as “continuous aerosol generating procedure” (known as AGP.)

During an AGP, particles from your loved one’s airway can spread out into the hospital room. This increases your exposure to COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Visiting Guidelines

In general, here is what you can expect if your loved one has COVID-19 or is being tested.

- You are strongly discouraged from visiting your loved one if you are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19, if you are older, or if you have an underlying medical condition.
- A member of your loved one’s health care team will give you personal protective equipment (known as PPE) as needed. This includes a respirator or surgical mask, a face shield or eye protection, a gown and gloves.

— The respirator is a mechanical-style respirator. For regulatory purposes, you will not be given an N95-style fabric respirator.

- If you remove any of your PPE during your visit, you will be at increased risk of getting COVID-19 and should quarantine at home. Follow the guidelines for where you live.
 - **Minnesota:** health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf
 - **Wisconsin:** dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02598a.htm

If You Wear a Respirator During Your Visit

Here is what you can expect if you visit while wearing a respirator.

- The risk for COVID-19 is lower than if you only wear a surgical mask.
- As long as you wear the respirator, gown and gloves given to you for your entire visit, you are not considered exposed or in “close contact” to a person with COVID-19.
- A member of the health care team will give you a mechanical respirator and will help you put it on and take it off.
- You may not be able to use the respirator if you have claustrophobia or a condition that keeps you from putting a hood on your head.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after taking off your PPE.

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- Give the respirator to your loved one's nurse so it can be disinfected.

If You Do Not Wear a Respirator During Your Visit

Here is what you can expect if you visit while not wearing a respirator.

- You are at higher risk for COVID-19 than if you wear a respirator.
- After your visit you should quarantine at home. Follow the guidelines for where you live.
 - **Minnesota:** health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf
 - **Wisconsin:** dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02598a.htm
- Watch for symptoms for 14 days. (See the next section.)
- Stay home.
- Wash your hands often.
- Clean surfaces you touch.

How to Quarantine at Home

During a quarantine, you need to separate from others in your house, limit your activities, and wait to see if you get sick. Follow these directions.

- Limit your contact with other people, including those in your house. Be very careful with those who are at higher risk, such as older adults and people who have medical conditions.
- Always stay 6 feet away from everyone, even when at home.
- Wear a mask when you are around other people.

- Clean your hands often. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch your face.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 such as:
 - temperature higher than 100 F
 - cough
 - new loss of taste or smell
 - shortness of breath
 - sore throat
 - shaking with chills
 - muscle pains and aches
 - headache
 - tired/fatigue
 - diarrhea.
- Get a COVID-19 test if you have any symptoms. Check your state or county health department for testing locations.