



POL	Visitor Policy			
All staff and Directors	Effective Date	Jan 2024	Compiled by	Anneline van Dyk
	Revision Date	Dec 2029	Approved by	Thuli Dlungwana
Reference	CH-POL-NUR-MAN-003	Version	1.0	 Chief Operations Officer
		Page	1 of 3	

1. INTRODUCTION

Crestcare Hospitals cares for many vulnerable patients and must provide an appropriate environment for the delivery of high-quality care. The Hospital strives to minimise and reduce the risk of Health Care Acquired Infections (HCAI) and recognises the responsibility of the patients' visitors. However, the Hospital also recognises the importance of ensuring the psychological wellbeing of patients by providing visitor access to relatives, carers and friends.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all patients, relatives, carers and their families. The policy details arrangements to support specific patient needs in a safe, clean and comforting environment. Visitors are asked to respect the following:

- Visiting times
- Infection prevention and control guidance and requirements
- Equality and diversity
- Privacy and dignity.

3. PURPOSE

- To ensure that all staff are aware of visiting hours, reasons for restrictions and procedures so that they can manage and control the flow of visitors in the ward.
- To highlight the responsibility and requirements of management and staff to ensure that all patients relatives, visitors and carers are aware of the visiting times and their responsibilities when visiting.

4. DEFINITIONS

- None

5. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

5.1 VISITING TIMES

- Visitor access is restricted to allow patients time to receive treatment/care, recover, rest and eat meals without interruption. Clinical interventions should be minimised as far as possible during visiting times.
- Visiting times must be displayed at ward entrances. In most areas, these are e.g.:
- 15h00 – 16h00
- 19h00 – 20h00
- The Unit Manager/ Shift Leader/ Night Manager are the gatekeepers in the application of this policy and may make allowance in exceptional circumstances to allow visiting outside these times. Circumstances when this may occur include:
 - When a patient is receiving palliative care and specific support, and care is required.
 - In specific circumstances to support a patient, e.g. a vulnerable patient. Provide support with nutrition and meeting personal hygiene needs, as a reasonable adjustment for patient with a Learning Disability or other special need
 - Paediatric patients. /Transitional Young Adults

- Maternity patients:
 - All maternity wards allow 3 visitors to a bed or cot
 - Open visiting for fathers and partners throughout maternity from 10:00 – 21:00.
- Critical Care patient:
 - Visitors permitted based on personal circumstances
 - Visiting times should reflect the needs of the general patient group of each speciality. Over stimulation and fatigue should be avoided. Some areas have designated rest periods which must be respected. It is the responsibility of the Unit Manager/ Shift Leader via ward staff to communicate these times to visitors.

5.2 INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL GUIDANCE

- To minimise the risk of HCAI, staff must ensure that:
 - A maximum of 2 people visit at any one time, unless special permission is granted by the ward sister/charge nurse.
 - Visitors must not visit if they have an infection e.g. cough, cold, unexplained rash, diarrhoea and/or vomiting. They must be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning to the ward and must seek advice from the ward Sister/Charge Nurse if unsure.
 - Visitors must clean their hands when entering or leaving an adult ward/unit. Alcohol gel or liquid soap and water can be used.
 - Visitors should also be advised to wash hands on leaving an isolation area.
 - Visitors to any children's ward/unit must wash their hands with soap and water on entry to and on leaving the ward/unit the ward. (Alcohol hand gel is not available because of the risk it poses to children if misused).
 - Visitors must not sit / lie on the bed.
 - Visitors should be discouraged from bringing high risk foods into hospital; specific dietary requirements should be discussed with the ward Sister/Charge Nurse.
 - Visitors must not use the patients' toilets.
 - Toiletries, tissues, towels etc. must not be shared with other patients.
 - Visitors are prohibited from touching wounds or medical devices.
 - Visiting by young children is limited to circumstances relating to improved patient care, e.g. in the interests of the patient or the child. The Sister/Charge Nurse should agree all requests. Children must be supervised at all times.
- Occasionally visiting may be further restricted due to an outbreak of infection. In the event of an Outbreak, the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse must ensure that this is clearly conveyed by appropriate signage at the entrance of the ward and appropriate Infection Prevention and Control processes are in place for all visitors to follow.

5.3 PRIVACY AND DIGNITY

- The provision of privacy and dignity for patients is an essential aspect of care and a very high priority for the Hospital. Visitors must be asked to always respect patients' privacy and dignity.
- Visitors should be asked to leave the room/bay when necessary.
- The Hospital has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse of any staff, patients or relatives.

6. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

- The Nursing Manager is accountable to the Hospital Board for compliance with the policy.
- The Unit Managers are accountable and responsible to the Nursing Manager for ensuring policy implementation and compliance in their respective ward(s)
- All staff is responsible for complying with the policy.

7. APPENDICES

- CH-QUAL-010 Visitors Guide

8. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

It is the responsibility of the Department Head and Quality Assurance Risk Manager on behalf of the Hospital manager to ensure that the tools and guidelines are in place for the effective implementation and monitoring of this policy. It is the responsibility of all Healthcare Workers employed at all Crestcare Hospitals to ensure strict compliance with this Policy and Procedure.