

HOW DO I GET APPROVAL TO VISIT?

How do I request a visit?

If you feel you meet any one of the following situations, please use [this contact list](#) to find the phone number of the patient's care team to contact them and request a visit.

In the second phase of our visitor reintegration at Unity Health, at a minimum every patient who has been in our hospital for longer than three days can have one weekly Essential Care Partner visit if they are pre-approved by the clinical care team. Patients in the specific scenarios outlined below may have additional Essential Care Partner visits or attend an appointment with them if they are pre-approved:

- **Patients who are experiencing a life-altering event** (for example: a patient who is at the end of their life, who is giving birth, undergoing major surgery, or who is experiencing a mental health crisis)
- **Patients for whom a caregiver is the main advocate in their care** (for example: a child under the age of 18, or an individual who cannot effectively communicate their needs)
- **Patients whose Essential Care Partners are required to support care procedures and appointments** (for example: a patient who cannot get to an appointment on their own, or for whom the absence of their Essential Care Partner may pose a serious safety risk to other patients)
- **Patients who require a visitor to support hospital work** (for example: patients who require support at major transition times, like when they are being discharged)

What will the clinic team ask me?

The clinic team will ask you a series of questions including:

- Your relation to the patient
- Whether you have tested positive for COVID-19 and whether you have any symptoms
- Reason for request (they may ask you whether you fit one of the categories listed below)
- Whether you have already been approved as an Essential Care Partner for the patient when they were on a different unit, or for another patient in the hospital

The team will then process your request and let you know whether you are approved as an Essential Care Partner who can visit. They will work with you to book a time for a visit with the patient.

How do I receive approval to visit?

The unit/clinic team must approve an Essential Care Partner in advance of a hospital visit. [Use this contact list to get in touch with the clinic/unit you hope to visit.](#)

Visiting a Patient

Unity Health Toronto website, printer-friendly frequently asked questions

The clinic/unit's decision to approve an Essential Care Partner is based on a number of factors. This process will help us make sure that we:

- Have enough space in our hospitals to allow patients with critical appointments and treatments to physically distance, reducing any potential exposure to or spread of COVID-19
- Can continue to increase our clinical services, allowing more patients to safely come to our hospitals without increasing risk
- Are giving our clinical teams the ability to focus on reviewing and approving requests for Essential Care Partners for our patients who need the most support

Please do not come to the hospital if you have not been approved to visit.

How long does an approval take?

The timelines depend on which clinic or unit the patient is in and the number of Essential Care Partners they can safely accommodate at a time in their space.

Please [use this list to find the contact information for the unit/clinic](#) where you would like to request a visit and ask them about their turnaround times for approvals.

Are drop-in visits allowed?

No, please do not come to the hospital if you have not been approved to visit in advance.

Do I have to be approved in order to have an outdoor visit with my loved one?

At this time patients are only being supported to have visits with approved Essential Care Partners inside the hospitals. Visiting with anyone outside of the hospital is not supported.

If you have not been approved as an Essential Care Partners do not come to the hospital to visit with the patient outside.

Please [use this list to find the contact information for the unit/clinic](#) where you would like to request a visit.

Once I am approved, do I need to call the unit before visiting each time?

Yes, please get in touch with the unit [using this list](#) to schedule a time to visit each time you hope to do so.

Why was I not approved as an Essential Care Partner who can visit?

There are two main reasons why someone may not be approved as an Essential Care Partner who can visit:

- 1) Your family member who is in hospital does not currently meet the criteria to have an Essential Care Partner visit.
 - In the second phase of our visitor reintegration at Unity Health, at a minimum every patient who has been in our hospital for longer than three days can have one weekly Essential Care Partner visit if they are pre-approved by the clinical care team. Patients in the specific scenarios outlined below may have additional Essential Care Partner visits or attend an appointment with them if they are pre-approved:
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 - **Patients who require a visitor to support hospital work** (for example: patients who require support at major transition times, like when they are being discharged)
- 2) You have not met the COVID-19 screening criteria at our front entrance and in order to ensure the safety of our patients, staff and community, we are not able to permit you to enter the hospital

I was told I don't currently qualify as an Essential Care Partner who can visit but I disagree. What should I do?

If you feel you meet the Essential Care Partner criteria to visit a patient but were told you do not qualify, you can request an appeal by contacting Patient Relations at the site where the patient you'd like to visit is located:

- St. Joseph's: 416-530-6652 or patientrelationsSJHC@unityhealth.to (Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
- St. Michael's: 416-864-5215 or patientrelationsSMH@unityhealth.to (Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
- Providence: 416-285-3666 ext. 4555 or patientrelationsPHC@unityhealth.to (Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

Why is the hospital taking a phased approach to family/support person access?

It is important that we continue to limit the number of individuals entering our hospitals to reduce the opportunity for spreading COVID-19. Our ultimate goal is to allow each of our patients to have an Essential Care Partner who can visit. We know that we'll have to reach this goal slowly to make sure everyone who enters our doors and everyone in our communities stays safe.

Our cautious approach makes it possible to act quickly depending on how the Covid19 pandemic changes.

How long will family/support person presence (visitor) restrictions be in place?

There is currently no timeline for our visitor restrictions – we are taking this slow but steady approach to ensure that everyone in our communities, including staff, patients and visitors, is safe.

Are visitors who have symptoms or who test positive for COVID-19 allowed to visit a patient?

No, anyone who has COVID-19 or symptoms of the virus cannot visit a patient. They should be self-isolating.