

Q & A 2018/2019 Flu Season Visitor Policy

What is the new visitor policy?

Those with cold or flu symptoms and visitors under the age of 14 are restricted from visiting the hospital and Westland House as part of our efforts to help protect our patients from the flu. This restriction is placed on occasion when public health conditions warrant extra protection for our patients.

Why are people under 14 being prevented from entering the hospital?

The age restriction is being put in place because the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that younger people are less likely to follow respiratory hygiene practices such as covering a cough, cleaning hands frequently, and wearing masks appropriately. People can be infectious even before symptoms appear, so Community Hospital and Westland House are taking this extra precaution to protect patients, visitors, and staff.

Are there exceptions?

Exceptions will be made only in limited circumstances, primarily when a visit is deemed critical because of the patient's condition. Visitors on-site should ask the hospital front desk to contact the administrative supervisor who will determine whether an exception will be made.

What if I have to have my child at the hospital?

Visitors younger than age 14 will not be allowed in hospital or Westland House areas designated as a patient care area, however, if it is not possible to take younger visitors home, they may remain under your supervision in the front lobby. Hospital staff and volunteers cannot watch children for you.

Are you still treating patients who are younger than 14?

Yes. As always, we will provide care to anyone who needs it, regardless of age.

Does the restriction apply to the Emergency department?

No. We strongly recommend that patients coming to the Emergency department make arrangements for childcare, but we know that can't always be done in emergency situations. Everyone who enters the Emergency department will be screened, and those with flu-like symptoms will be provided with a mask to wear.

Does the restriction apply to all other Community Hospital facilities?

It only applies to the hospital and Westland House at this time.

How long will the policy be in place?

We will evaluate the need for the age restriction throughout the flu season and rescind it when it is no longer considered necessary.

Are other hospitals doing this?

All hospitals in Monterey County have the same visitor restrictions to protect their patients, staff, and visitors.

Still have questions?

Contact Community Hospital Infection Prevention department at (831) 622-2669.