

Limits on Who Can Enter UHN During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Information for patients, caregivers, visitors and Essential Care Partners

Read this brochure to learn:

- why University Health Network (UHN) is limiting who can enter the hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic
- what limits are in place
- what to expect when you arrive for an appointment
- how to keep your family, friends or caregivers involved in your care

Important: Only patients with appointments and their approved Essential Care Partners are allowed into the hospital. Patients who need emergency care may enter through the Emergency Department entrance only.

We know that family, friends and others who support you are more than visitors. They are partners in your care. Friends, family and caregivers may provide physical and emotional support, care for you at home and help us understand your health. Although we are not able to allow them to join you at the hospital at this time, we will do our best to include them in your care.

Who can enter UHN hospitals?

Only patients with appointments and their **approved** Essential Care Partner can enter the hospital or visit on hospital property at this time.

An Essential Care Partner is a support person who is considered essential to the safety and well-being of a patient while they are in the hospital. There is no access for other visitors or members of the public.

Please do not come to UHN unless you have an appointment or you are going to the Emergency Department.

- You **must** have an appointment to enter specific areas in the hospital. Confirm your appointment with your health care team **before** coming to the hospital.
- If you have an emergency, you can visit the Emergency Departments at Toronto Western or Toronto General. You must enter through the Emergency Department entrance. You do not need an appointment.
- All Essential Care Partners must be approved in advance. If you would like to have an Essential Care Partner support you during your hospital stay or appointment, please talk with the unit or clinic manager.

Why is UHN limiting who can enter the building or visit on hospital property?

UHN is limiting who can enter the hospital or visit on hospital property to lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 to patients and the staff who care for them.

Patient care and limits to physical space

There is a limit to how many people can be in the hospital at a time. Limiting visitors and Essential Care Partners ensures we have enough space to see as many patients and provide as much care as we can.

Patient and staff safety

The chances of COVID-19 entering and spreading within the hospital are much lower when fewer people are in the building. Fewer people in the hospital means:

- there is more space in the hospital to allow for physical distance (2 metres or 6 feet) between people.
- fewer people using common areas and touching surfaces such as door handles and elevator buttons.
- a lower chance that someone in the building has the virus and can spread it to others.
- patients are better protected. People with health problems have a high risk of getting seriously sick if they get COVID-19.
- the hospital gives out and uses less personal protective equipment such as masks. The hospital needs to make sure there is enough personal protective equipment for patients and staff providing their care.

COVID-19 spreads more easily when people gather in groups, even outside. This is why we have limits on who can visit inside and outside our hospital buildings.

How does the health care team approve an Essential Care Partner?

An Essential Care Partner is **only** approved for patients who:

- are expected to stay in the hospital for more than 2 weeks
- are having major surgery

- are getting end-of-life care
- are having a mental health crisis
- are under 18 years old
- have an intellectual or developmental disability
- have cognitive impairment or are unable to communicate due to an injury or illness (such as aphasia)
- need a caregiver's help to safely attend an appointment

How often an Essential Care Partner can come to the hospital depends on the patient's situation.

- In many cases, an Essential Care Partner can have 1 approved visit during the hospital stay. After every visit the health care team assesses when the Essential Care Partner can come again.
- In other situations, the Essential Care Partner may be able to enter the hospital 2 times a week.

Who can be an Essential Care Partner?

An Essential Care Partner may be a family member, friend, neighbour, paid private caregiver or someone else.

- Children under 12 years old cannot enter the hospital at this time, except in special situations, and must be approved in advance.

Patients who are eligible can choose 1 Essential Care Partner who may visit during their hospital stay. You can choose a second Essential Care Partner in case your main support person is not available.

These limits to Essential Care Partner visits must be followed inside and outside all of UHN's hospitals. Please do not arrange visits outside.

How to ask for Essential Care Partner approval

You will need to have your Essential Care Partner approved **before** your appointment or visit. Speak with the clinic or inpatient unit manager as early as possible before your visit or appointment about your situation, needs and options. If the manager is not available, talk to the administrator-in-charge.

If you are having surgery, your clinic will call you the day before your surgery to arrange your Essential Care Partner. If you are having your surgery on a Monday, the clinic will call you the Friday before.

What to expect when coming to the hospital with an Essential Care Partner

Essential Care Partners play an important role in stopping COVID-19 from spreading in the hospital.

- We ask Essential Care Partners limit close contact with other people as much as possible to lower the chances of being exposed to COVID-19.
- Tell the clinic or unit if your Essential Care Partner tests positive for COVID-19 within 2 weeks of being in the hospital with you.
- All Essential Care Partners must check in at the unit and provide their contact information. We ask for contact information in case we need to do contact tracing.
- Essential Care Partners may not eat or drink in any patient rooms or clinic areas.
- Depending on the area they are going to, we may ask your Essential Care Partner to arrive at a scheduled time, wear an ID badge, or learn how to put on and take off personal protective equipment properly. There may be other requirements you need to follow.
- Your Essential Care Partner must stay with you at all times. Essential Care Partners are not allowed to walk around the hospital.

- If the hospital has too many people inside, Essential Care Partners may not be allowed in the building even if they have been approved.
- We may ask Essential Care Partners to wait in hallways or other waiting areas to keep physical distance between patients in the waiting room.
- Please discuss your situation with the unit or clinic manager.

Some care areas have specific guidelines for Essential Care Partners:

- **If you are in the Emergency Department:** Essential Care Partners must wait for the patient in the Emergency Department waiting room or outside the hospital. A member of the health care team will update the Essential Care Partner when there is new information.

One Essential Care Partner may be allowed to stay with the patient if the patient cannot be alone in the Emergency Department, such as if they have an intellectual or developmental disability or they are unable to communicate. This will be determined by the nursing team.

We do not allow Essential Care Partners in the Rapid Assessment Area because there is not enough room.

Please discuss your situation with the staff at the entrance to the Emergency Department. You may also speak with a Charge Nurse, Manager or Administrator-On-Call.

- **If you are staying in the hospital overnight (inpatient):** Essential Care Partner visiting hours are between 8:00 am to 9:00 pm. If approved, the visit can last for up to 4 hours.

For patients in Intensive Care Units: Visits can last for up to 2 hours.

- **If you are coming to the hospital for an appointment (outpatient):** Essential Care Partners may be asked to leave the hospital and come back when you are ready leave.
- **If you are having day surgery at Toronto Western:** Approved Essential Care Partners are not able to stay with patients in the Pre-Operative Care Unit (POCU) before surgery or the Post-Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU) after surgery.

The health care team will contact you the day before your surgery to discuss your Essential Care Partner and plans for picking you up after the surgery.

- **If you are having day surgery at Toronto General:** 1 Essential Care Partner may stay with you in the Pre-Operative Care Unit (POCU), if approved.

Your Essential Care Partner may wait in the surgical waiting room on the 3rd floor, Munk building while you are in surgery. The health care team will contact your Essential Care Partner when you are ready to be picked up. Essential Care Partners may not enter the Post-Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU).

The health care team will contact you the day before your surgery to discuss your Essential Care Partner and plans for picking you up after the surgery.

- **If you are being admitted to Toronto General the same day as your surgery:** 1 Essential Care Partner may stay with you in the Pre-Operative Care Unit (POCU), if approved.

Your Essential Care Partner may wait in the surgical waiting room on the 3rd floor, Munk building while you are in surgery. The health care team will contact your Essential Care Partner at the end of your surgery. They can visit you in your room when you are moved from the Post-Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU).

The health care team will contact you the day before your surgery to discuss your Essential Care Partner.

For the most up-to-date information about preparing for your visit, read [UHN's COVID-19 page](https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19) (<https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19>). You can also read the handout [What essential care partners need to know before coming to UHN](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Essential_Care_Partners_Quick_Guide.pdf) (https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Essential_Care_Partners_Quick_Guide.pdf).

Where can I find contact information for my clinic or unit?

Find contact information for your clinic or unit on [UHN's website](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies) (https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies). You can search by clinic, unit or hospital.

Who can I contact if I disagree with a decision for my situation?

Clinic and unit managers must follow UHN's policies on who is allowed to enter UHN during the pandemic. They are only able to approve Essential Care Partners for patients or situations that fit within the safety criteria. These criteria protect the safety of all UHN patients, visitors and staff.

If your request for an Essential Care Partner is not approved but you feel you should be eligible, contact UHN Patient Relations at 416 340 4907 or [by email](mailto:patientrelations@uhn.ca) (patientrelations@uhn.ca). Patient Relations will speak with you about your situation. While an exception may not be possible, we want to be sure the clinic or unit manager had all the information when reviewing to your request.

What to expect when you come for an appointment or treatment

Entrance Screening

UHN screening staff are at each entrance. Entrance screeners will ask about your health and the following symptoms:

- fever
- chills
- new onset of cough
- worsening chronic cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- runny or stuffy nose without another cause (such as allergies)
- eye pain or pink eye
- unexplained headache
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or stomach pain
- decrease or loss of sense of smell or taste
- unexplained fatigue or weakness (malaise), muscle aches
- any trouble walking or moving around, or unexplained falls
- any increase in confusion or delirium

Note: Patients who have symptoms are allowed in the hospital. Essential Care Partners who have symptoms are not allowed to enter.

You will also be asked if you have:

- tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days
- had any close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- received a notice from the COVID-19 alert app that you were exposed to COVID-19

UHN Online Screening Tool

Patients can speak with the entrance screener **or** use the [online screening tool](https://uhnpatientscreen.ca) (https://uhnpatientscreen.ca). No personal information is collected or stored through the screening tool.

Follow these steps to use the online screening tool:

1. When you arrive at the hospital, go to the [online screening tool](https://uhnpatientscreen.ca) (https://uhnpatientscreen.ca) on your mobile device.

2. Answer the questions about your health, COVID-19 symptoms, close contact and recent travel.
3. Show your final screen to our entrance screening staff. This screen will have a date, time and either say PASS or will ask you to speak further with staff.

Essential Care Partners must speak with an entrance screener when they arrive.

Universal Masking

Everyone entering UHN must wear a medical mask. Screening staff give you a medical mask when you arrive at the hospital.

- If you are wearing a mask from home, screening staff will give you a medical mask to wear instead. Always put your reusable mask in a bag after removing it.
- Patients and Essential Care Partners must wear a medical mask **at all times** while inside UHN, including inpatients when leaving their room.

Find more information about masks at [UHN's COVID-19 page](https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19) (<https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19>).

Hand Hygiene

You must clean your hands when you enter the hospital, and before and after putting on a mask.

If you are wearing gloves, you will be asked to remove them and discard them or put them away to clean your hands properly. Clean your hands often while in the hospital.

Physical Distancing

Please practice physical distancing inside the hospital. Stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people as much as possible and follow directions from staff, wall signage and floor markers.

We may ask your Essential Care Partner to wait for you in the hallway or another location if required for physical distancing. Learn more about what [physical distancing measures](https://www.uhn.ca/covid19#inside) (https://www.uhn.ca/covid19#inside) are in place on our website.

My caregiver is not able to join me as an Essential Care Partner. How can they still support me?

If you are staying in the hospital overnight (inpatient) and your Essential Care Partner is not able to visit:

- ask your health care team if you can use a tablet on the unit to have a virtual visit with your Essential Care Partner or other family members.
- ask your health care team to arrange scheduled telephone calls with your Essential Care Partner. During these calls, your health care team can provide updates and answer questions. Please choose 1 person as a contact for the calls and try to contact the unit by phone only at the scheduled time.

If you are coming to the hospital for an appointment (outpatient) and your Essential Care Partner is not able to come with you:

- they can join you over the phone. Call them on your phone and use the speakerphone so everyone can hear each other.
- ask your health care team if you can record your appointment to share with your Essential Care Partner or caregiver later.
 - You can only record in a private setting such as a clinic room.
 - Everyone in the room must agree to be recorded.

Important: To protect everyone's privacy, audio and video recording is not allowed in public and common areas of the hospital.

What services are available at UHN?

- **Telephone interpretation:** We provide telephone interpretation for patients who prefer to speak in a language other than English during appointments.
- **Free Wi-Fi:** Bring your own smartphone, tablet or laptop and use our free guest Wi-Fi.
- **Centres for Spiritual Reflection:** UHN's Centres for Spiritual Reflection and Musallah rooms are open for private prayer and meditation.
- **Food courts:** Food court restaurants are open but seating areas are closed.
 - **If you are an inpatient:** pick up your food and eat it in your hospital room.
 - **If you are at the hospital for an appointment or you are an Essential Care Partner:** please wait until you can leave the hospital to eat. If you are not able to wait, please **do not** remove your mask to eat or drink in a clinic waiting room or while visiting an inpatient room. You may only take your mask off to eat or drink if you are in an area where you can be at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people.
- **Outpatient pharmacies:** Outpatient pharmacies are open to pick up prescriptions.
- **Personal item drop-off for inpatients:** Your family or friends can drop off items you need during your stay, such as:
 - clean clothes
 - a smartphone, tablet, e-reader, headphones or charger
 - reading glasses, dentures, hearing aids, wheelchair or walking aid (cane, walker)
 - personal care items such as a toothbrush, hairbrush or face soap
 - small personal items such as a photo, book or magazine

- a personal letter, note or greeting card
- Princess Margaret only: food deliveries

Please **do not** bring:

- valuable items such as jewellery
- flowers
- latex balloons
- food for patients staying at Toronto General, Toronto Western or Toronto Rehab

Hospital staff collect these items at the entrance. The person dropping off an item fills out an information slip with your name and the unit you are staying in. Hospital staff bring the item to you.

- Limit the number of personal items you have at the hospital. Having fewer personal items lowers the chances of COVID-19 spreading and keeps your area easy to clean.
- If possible, please limit the number of times you have items dropped off at the hospital.

Someone is picking me up from the hospital. Where do I meet them?

When you are ready to leave the hospital, call the person picking you up and ask them to meet you outside the hospital entrance. They must wait for you outside the hospital unless they have made other arrangements with the health care team.

Where can I learn more about changes at UHN due to COVID-19?

Our hospital processes change quickly as we learn more about the COVID-19 virus. Find up-to-date information at [UHN's COVID-19 page](https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19) (<https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19>), such as:

- updates on the [visitor restrictions](https://www.uhn.ca/Covid19/Pages/COVID_updates_for_visitors.aspx) (https://www.uhn.ca/Covid19/Pages/COVID_updates_for_visitors.aspx)
- what [hospital entrances](https://www.uhn.ca/covid19#enter) (<https://www.uhn.ca/covid19#enter>) patients can use
- what to expect [when you arrive](https://www.uhn.ca/covid19#arriving) (<https://www.uhn.ca/covid19#arriving>)
- links to other credible information on COVID-19