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

**Important:** Only patients with appointments and their Essential Care Partners are allowed into the hospital. Patients who need emergency care may also enter through the Emergency Department entrance only.
Who can enter UHN hospitals?

Only patients with appointments and their Essential Care Partners 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 members of the public or other visitors.

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 enter the Emergency Departments at Toronto Western or Toronto General without an appointment, through the Emergency Department entrance.

If you are eligible, you may choose 1 Essential Care Partner who is needed for your safety and well-being. You may also choose a second Essential Care Partner to visit if the main support person is not available. Other caregivers, visitors and drivers are not allowed in the hospital.

- 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. Note: Some UHN hospitals and clinics have limited space or areas may be under construction.

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 one 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) 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.
- less use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The hospital needs to make sure there is enough personal protective equipment for patients and for the 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.

Who can be an Essential Care Partner?

An Essential Care Partner might 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.
• Patients expected to stay in hospital longer than 2 weeks, 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).

Once approved, inpatients may have their Essential Care Partner visit each day. Patients are eligible for an Essential Care Partner visit depending on their health and how long they are expected to stay in the hospital.

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

• Patients coming for an outpatient (daytime) appointment may have 1 Essential Care Partner to support their care at UHN, only if needed for the patient’s safety and well-being.

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.

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

Essential Care Partners play an important role in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in the hospital. We ask that Essential Care Partners limit close contact with other people as much as possible and let UHN know about positive COVID test results.

• 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.
• Depending on the area you are coming to, your Essential Care Partner may be asked to come at a scheduled time, to wear an ID badge, or receive training for properly putting on and removing personal protective equipment (PPE). 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 travel around the hospital.

In some cases, Essential Care Partners may be asked to wait in hallways or other waiting areas to allow for physical distancing between patients in the waiting room.

**Inpatients:** Essential Care Partners are not allowed to leave and re-enter the hospital on the same day.

**Outpatients:** Essential Care Partners may be asked to leave the hospital and come back when the patient is ready to leave.

**Toronto Western Day Surgery patients:** 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 your Essential Care Partner when you are ready to be picked up.

**Toronto General Day Surgery patients:** One Essential Care Partner may stay with you in the Pre-Operative Care Unit (POCU). Your Essential Care Partner may stay in the surgical waiting room until you are ready to leave. 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).

• If you are staying overnight in the hospital, your visitor may come to the hospital between 8:00 am to 9:00 pm. The visit can last for up to 4 hours.

**For patients in Intensive Care Units:** Visits can last for up to 2 hours.
In special situations, patients may be able to have longer visits. These situations might include patients who:

- are receiving end of life care
- are under 18 years old
- have an intellectual or developmental disability
- have had major surgery
- have cognitive impairment or difficulty communicating due to an injury or illness (such as aphasia)

Please discuss your situation with the unit or clinic manager.

Please review [UHN’s COVID-19 page](https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19) for the most up-to-date, important information about preparing for your visit, and 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).

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

Please note that for the safety of other patients, visitors and our staff, our clinic and unit managers must follow the hospital’s policies on who can be allowed to enter UHN during the pandemic.

They are only able to permit Essential Care Partners for patients or situations that fit within the current safety criteria.

If you are declined approval but feel that you should be eligible you can contact UHN Patient Relations at 416 340 4907 or by email (patientrelations@uhn.ca). While an exception may not be possible, the Patient Relations team will help work with you to understand if there is information that the team was not aware of when making their decision.
What to expect when you come for an appointment or treatment

Universal Masking

Everyone entering UHN must wear a mask. You will be given a mask by screening staff. If you are wearing a mask from home, staff will check to be sure it is effective.

You must wear your mask at all times while inside UHN. More information about masks can be found on UHN’s COVID-19 page (https://www.uhn.ca/COVID19).

Hand Hygiene

You must wash 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 wash your hands properly. We recommend that you wash your hands often throughout your visit.

Entrance Screening

UHN screening staff are at each entrance. Patients who have symptoms will still be permitted to access the hospital. Essential Care Partners who have symptoms will not be allowed to enter.

Entrance screeners will ask if you have any of 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

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 a respiratory illness, has tested positive for COVID-19, or who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days

**UHN Online Screening Tool**

Patients can speak with the entrance screener OR use the online screening tool (https://uhnpatientscreen.ca).

No personal information is collected or stored through the screening tool.

Follow 3 easy steps to use the online screening tool:

1. When you arrive at the hospital, go to the online screening tool (https://uhnpatientscreen.ca) on your mobile device.
2. Answer the questions about 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 still speak with an entrance screener when they arrive.

**Physical Distancing**

Please practice physical distancing inside the hospital. Follow directions from staff, wall signage and floor markers.

Your Essential Care Partner may be asked 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) 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 overnight in the hospital and your Essential Care Partner is not able to visit you, 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.

If your Essential Care Partner is not able to join you at the hospital for an outpatient appointment, they can join you over the phone. Call them on your phone and use the speakerphone so everyone can hear each other.

You can also ask your health care team if you can record your appointment to share with your 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 to patients when at UHN?**

• **Telephone interpretation:** We provide a telephone interpretation service 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 courts remain open, but seating areas are closed. Please pick up your food and do not sit in the food court.

• **Outpatient pharmacies:** Outpatient pharmacies are open to pick up prescriptions.

**I am picking someone up. Where will I meet them?**

Ask the patient to call you when they are ready to be picked up. You must wait outside the hospital.
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), such as:

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