



## COVID-19

# Staying safe from the virus in the hospital

Many hospitals are treating people who are infected with COVID-19 now. If you're in the hospital for another reason, this may be an unsettling time. It's common to be concerned about becoming infected with the virus.

It's important to realize, though, that all hospitals have policies to prevent the spread of infections. For example, doctors and nurses are trained to wash their hands before treating you. Hospitals have stepped up these policies now and taken further steps to protect their patients.

Your caregivers are very aware of the threat of COVID-19. They will do everything they can to keep you safe.

## What hospitals are doing

Different hospitals may have different policies. But in general, hospitals are:

- ✔ **Screening for COVID-19.** Those who come to the hospital will have their temperature taken. They'll be asked about any symptoms, such as a fever, a cough, or shortness of breath. They may be asked if they've had contact with anyone who's been diagnosed with the virus.
- ✔ **Treating patients who have COVID-19 in a separate area.** To help limit the spread of the infection, many hospitals have staff members who treat only these patients.
- ✔ **Limiting visitors.** In some cases, no visitors are allowed. In others, a hospital may allow one healthy visitor.
- ✔ **Following guidelines for infection prevention.** These include frequent hand-washing and disinfecting high-touch surfaces. And hospital staff wear face masks when working with patients.



## What you can do

We all have a role to play in keeping ourselves safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Here are some things you can do while you're in the hospital.

- ✔ **Stay in your room.** This will limit your exposure to the virus. It may be boring, but it's the safest place for you.
- ✔ **Wash your hands often.** If you are able to get out of bed, wash your hands well and often. Use soap and water, and scrub for 20 seconds. Then rinse and dry them well. Always wash them after you use the bathroom, before you eat, and after you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose. If you can't get up, use hand sanitizer to clean your hands.
- ✔ **Accept that you may not have visitors.** It may be lonely for you, but this policy is for your safety and the safety of others. You can connect with family and friends using your phone or computer. If you need something brought from home, such as glasses or a phone charger, find out where at the hospital the item can be dropped off.
- ✔ **Speak up if you have safety concerns.** Don't be shy to correct people if they aren't washing their hands properly, wearing face masks, or taking other precautions. These actions are vital to prevent the spread of infection.
- ✔ **Try to be understanding.** People with COVID-19 are flooding the system now, and many health care workers are sick with the virus. As a result, your hospital may be short of staff. You may have to wait a little longer for meals or help. Try to be calm and patient. This is a stressful time for everyone, including your caregivers. They are doing their best to provide you with good care.

HW 040920

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