

Section 9	Clinical Policies	03/29/99 -Originated
Subject 9.7	Visitor Information	02/10/11 -Reviewed w changes -Reviewed w/o changes
Policy 9.7.1	Hospital and Ambulatory Visitation	Health System -Author

Hospital and Ambulatory Services Visitation

Policy

The University of Texas Medical Branch provides a caring environment while recognizing the importance of visitation to our patients, their families, and friends. These guidelines were developed for visitation while considering the following factors: a) the benefits of visitation to the patient; b) the impact of visitation on patient care; and c) the safety and security of patients, visitors, and employees. The following guidelines shall be followed to assure that patients and their visitors achieve a positive visitation experience without compromising patient care, confidentiality, and security.

Each patient has the right (subject to his or her consent, which can be withdrawn at any time) to receive the visitors whom he or she designates, including but not limited to a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), a family member or friend. Visitation privileges shall not be restricted, limited, or otherwise denied on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. The type and number of visitors present may however be reasonably restricted or limited by staff to the extent such restriction or limitation is clinically necessary and communicated by the health care providers to the patient (or his or her designated representative or decision maker). Patient safety and privacy are additional factors to be considered in this determination.

Inpatients are advised of hospital visitation policies through receipt of the patient handbook; ambulatory areas and the emergency services areas have this information posted.

Visitation Guidelines

In the hospital, general visiting hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Patients are allowed to receive two visitors at a time. However, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the unit charge nurse who has the authority to determine the number of visitors and length of visitation, based on patient needs and other unit activities. Because visiting hours or the number of visitors may be restricted depending on the patient's condition or type of patient care unit, visitors are encouraged to inquire about area specific visitation standards.

Visitors under the age of 14 must be cleared for visitation by the charge nurse and must be accompanied by an adult other than the patient. A screening tool will be used to assist the charge nurse in determining the

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**Visitation
Guidelines,
continued**

appropriateness of a child’s visitation in the ISCU/ISCI or PICU unit. All visitors to these units must call from the phone outside the unit to request entry.

Ambulatory Services allow visits between 8am to 5pm. The type and number of visitors present in the exam or procedure room may however be reasonably restricted or limited by staff to the extent such restriction or limitation is clinically necessary and communicated by the health care providers to the patient (or his or her designated representative or decision maker). Patient safety, privacy are additional factors to be considered in this determination.

After Hours Access and Overnight Visitors

Visitors will be permitted after hours at the discretion of the unit charge nurse based on patient need and/or request. Overnight visitation is generally discouraged but may be allowed at the discretion of the unit charge nurse based on patient need and/or request. Visitors of patients may be authorized to remain in public waiting areas overnight by the unit charge nurse

Visitors wishing to remain in patients' rooms at the end of normal visiting hours will be instructed to obtain a visitor's pass from University Police.

For **visitors** attempting to enter the hospital after 9:00 p.m., University Police will phone the unit to obtain permission from the charge nurse. If permission is granted, the visitor will then be issued a time-encoded pass. University Police will record the name and destination of each visitor.

All visitors should be free from recent exposure to communicable diseases and without fever or visible signs of illness. During times of infectious outbreak in the community (e.g., influenza, measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc.), the Department of Healthcare Epidemiology may recommend restrictions in visitation. Visitors to patients in isolation are subject to isolation guidelines.

All visitors should check with the patient’s nurse for additional standards or restrictions particular to the patient.

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Visitor Conduct

Unit/Area	Standards
TDCJ	Refer to Policy 9.9.2, Security Associated with the TDCJ Hospital
ISCU/ISCI/PICU	Parents determine the list of approved visitors. Visitors must have appropriate identification.
Recovery Room	Visitation is based on special circumstances at the discretion of the charge nurse
Adult ICU's	Permission must be granted by the receptionist or approved by the unit charge nurse over the designated phones.

Hospital and ambulatory services visitors are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and courteous manner:

- Adhere to visiting hour restrictions
- Refrain from smoking. UTMB is a non-smoking institution and smoking is prohibited everywhere on campus, as well as in UTMB affiliated facilities and vehicles
- Not consume alcoholic beverages on campus
- Running, littering or loitering in the hallways is prohibited
- Refrain from loud conversations or from any behavior that may be disruptive to a patient
- Children should be under the close supervision of an adult at all times and managed appropriately
- Approved visitors of the TDCJ hospital must abide by the regulations established by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- Dress appropriately.

**Enforcement/
Compliance**

All healthcare staff and employees are responsible for the enforcement of this policy. Employees visiting patients are also subject to the information listed in this document.

Visitors who are unresponsive to requests or displaying inappropriate behavior will be referred to the appropriate nursing administrator or clinic manager and/or University Police.

References

- 8.1.4 Workplace Violence
- 8.2.5 Security Management
- 9.3.13 Patients' Rights
- 9.3.14 Patients' Responsibilities