

When your loved one is in the hospital during COVID-19

Hospitals are doing all they can to protect patients, staff and visitors from being exposed to COVID-19. This means big changes to visitation policies. How we communicate with health care providers may also be different. **Family and friends are essential to the patient's healing process. Learn how you can support your loved one while they are receiving treatment.**

Learn the visitation policy at your hospital



- Ask for the most updated copy of the hospital's visitation policy. It may change continuously as the response to the pandemic evolves.
- Understand that visitation may differ depending on the unit the patient resides in. For example, Labor & Delivery may allow one adult visitor, but Cardiology or the Emergency Department may not allow any visitors. This may differ from hospital to hospital.
- Recognize that this separation may cause distress for you and your loved one. Identify a coping technique like deep breathing, meditation, guided imagery, or calling a friend, that you can use to you through this difficult time.

Learn how to best communicate with hospital staff



- Good communication with hospital staff can help ease our stress and anxiety. Let staff know that you'd like consistent updates regarding your loved ones care. Give them a reliable number to call and let them know if it's okay if they leave a message.
- Ask what times of day you should expect updates from the doctor or nursing staff. You may need a code to receive information about the patient. Be sure to have this on hand along with your questions for the doctor to avoid delays in communication.
- Remember, this is a stressful time for hospital staff, too. Like you, they want the best outcomes for patients. They may keep communication brief to return to patient care.

Care for yourself and your loved one during their stay

Hi!



- If the patient is able, schedule regular virtual visits with them. Many hospitals allow patients to have their cell phones with them to make calls or video chat.
- Ask the visitor information staff if food, flowers, books, magazines, cards or other items can be delivered or dropped off to the patient.
- When loved ones are ill it can cause trauma to both the patient and the family. Mental health professionals trained in trauma therapies can help you work through the memories and emotions associated with this event. Reach out to your private provider or contact the **Hanover County Community Services Board at 804-365-4222.**