



Exceptional care that makes a difference

Visiting or Accompanying Patients at Mercy Hospital

Information for Patients and their Whanau/Family and Friends

Statement of Intent

Mercy Hospital embraces the principles of partnership, participation and protection inherent in the Treaty of Waitangi, and welcomes the presence and involvement of a patient's whanau/family as integral to their wellbeing.

We support the right of patients to determine who whanau/family is and to decide the role they will play in their care.

Mercy Hospital asks that patients and their visitors work together with staff so that safe access to all patients is maintained and the Hospital's therapeutic environment is not compromised.

Visiting Hours and Visitor Numbers

- Visiting hours are designed to ensure patients have the opportunity to enjoy the company of family and friends whilst recognising the need to maintain the comfort and safety of all patients.
- Visiting hours in the ward are from 2pm – 8pm daily. Whanau/family are welcome outside of the regular visiting hours but must talk to a Nurse or Administrator at Ward Reception before going to see the patient.
- When a patient is in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), family members are welcome to sit with the patient at any time.
- Occasionally, in shared rooms, the number of people or length of time spent with a patient may be restricted out of consideration to other patients nearby.
- Due to limited space in the Day Surgery Unit, we invite no more than two whanau/family members remain with the patient.

On rare occasions, when there are high levels of illness in the community, the Infection Prevention & Control Nurse and/or the Director of Clinical Services may limit the presence of whanau/ family and friends

Requests by the patient for a whanau/family member/friend to stay overnight

- When the patient will benefit from a support person due to language barriers or to assist in meeting specific cultural or health needs a whanau/family member or friend may remain with a patient overnight. Wherever possible, this need to be arranged prior to the patient's admission to allow an appropriate room to be assigned.
- Late requests for someone to remain with a patient overnight must be discussed with the nurse in charge, who will consider the nature of the request and the location of the patient. Out of respect for the privacy and dignity of other patients, support people cannot be accommodated in a shared patient room. Where a request can be met, the family member / friend will be offered a lazy-boy chair or sofa bed.
- A fee is charged for a support person staying overnight. Meals are an additional cost; for current charges please ask the Booking Coordinator or nurse in charge of the ward. This fee is not generally covered by ACC, insurance or other funders and is the responsibility of the patient or family member/friend.

Patients' choice to restrict whanau/family & friends

- A patient has the right to choose who is involved in their care and who may visit them.
- In discussion with the patient who has requested no visiting or restricted visiting, nursing staff will notify the ward / unit Administrator and the main reception desk.
- The patient's wish will be documented in the clinical record.
- A sign will be placed on the door to the room or on closed curtains (if the patient is in a shared room) to advise family / friends of their wish for privacy / rest and for messages to be left at the ward reception desk.

Responsibilities of Whanau/Family and Friends

- Mercy Hospital staff ask that when you are visiting patients on the ward, or in the DSU, to be respectful of other patients and their right to privacy.
- There may be times when you are asked to temporarily leave the room to ensure the privacy and safety of the patient(s) during certain procedures or discussions.
- You are asked to work together with staff so that their presence does not limit safe access to any patient at any time.
- If you have a cold, diarrhoea, viral illness or are generally feeling unwell we ask that you do not visit, to prevent the spread of infection.
- Please gel your hands when entering and exiting the ward or Day Surgery Unit. This helps to minimise the spread of infection and keep patients safe.

- Rarely, the hospital may need to limit family presence (in response to public health and / or hospital safety or security concerns); e.g. If a patient is being nursed in contact isolation, access to the patient may be limited and they will be provided with personal protective equipment to wear. The hospital will keep patients and families informed and ensure that these limitations are kept to a minimum.
- Children supervised by a parent/caregiver are welcomed. They should remain with the supervising adult, whose responsibility it is to ensure a safe and restful environment for patients is not compromised by their presence.
- Please don't touch any equipment or tubing associated with the patient's treatment or care. If you have concerns, please ring the bell for the nurse.
- Any incidents or accidents must be notified to staff who will complete an incident report.
- Whanau/family or friends requiring medical attention shall be directed to their GP, after-hours service or in an emergency, to the Dunedin Hospital Emergency department.
- Where a person's behaviour creates a direct risk or threat or is disruptive of the functioning of the ward, they will be asked to leave the premises. Security and/or NZ Police will be notified and may be asked for support, depending on the situation.
- Mercy Hospital is a smoke and vape free campus.

In the event of an emergency

- On the activation of the fire alarm, visitors in the ward or DSU will be asked to remain with patients unless they have a mobility impairment. In this case they will be assisted by non-nursing staff to leave the building. (Mercy Hospital has a 'horizontal evacuation' plan and patient areas are not evacuated unless there is a fire in the immediate area).
- Following activation of the fire alarm, no one is permitted to enter the hospital until the 'All Clear' has been given.

We thank you for supporting your whanau/family member during their stay in hospital and for working with staff to ensure the safety and privacy of all patients.