

PATIENT SUPPORT PERSON



What is a Patient Support Person?



- We are balancing the safety of limiting visitors with knowing that it is important for patients to have both a caring presence and strong support of someone who can help them manage and communicate about their care.
- Patients who have strong support often have less anxiety, understand their care better, recover faster, and are better prepared to return home.
- To make sure our patients have the support they need, we now think of you, the patients' visitor, as a **Patient Support Person** with specific and important duties.
- For the safety of our patients, staff, and community we are limiting the number of support persons (visitors) to one per each adult patient.



Who can be a support person?

The patient identifies their support person. Support people are usually a spouse or partner, a very close family member, or a trusted friend. That person's name and contact information will be given to the clinical care team, as well as staff at the hospital entrances.

They will be given an item which will identify them as the support person such as a tag or wristband.

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The Support Person Guidelines



- ▶ Should be the **same person** for the entire hospital stay. This allows the support person to understand the progress of the patient's care throughout the stay. Changes to who the support person is will be discouraged.
- ▶ Is the **only person** permitted to be in the hospital and with the patient. They should stay in the room and avoid moving around in the hallways and non-patient areas.
- ▶ May stay in the hospital for the entire day of a procedure or stay with the patient when moving from the Emergency Department to the patient room.
- ▶ May be able to stay overnight in certain UPMC hospitals for some situations, if the patient wants them to. Talk with the nursing team to see if this is possible.
- ▶ Should always wear their own cloth face mask when in the hospital.
- ▶ Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be given based on the health condition and needs of the patient.
- ▶ Must be older than 18, pass the daily clinical and temperature screening when entering the building, and not be sick or have symptoms such as shortness of breath, cough, and fever.
- ▶ Should be someone who has not been outside of the local community in the last 14 days and has not recently been diagnosed with COVID-19.

NOTE: These guidelines will vary by situations such as in Pediatrics, Behavioral Health, Obstetrics (OB), and the Emergency Department. Exceptions, and support persons for patients who are in the hospital for suspected or diagnosed COVID-19, must be pre-approved by the Nursing Leadership Team.

What does a support person do?

In-person, by phone, or through video:

Communicates with the Care Team

- Attends pre-procedure appointments and educational sessions with the patient
- Joins the patient for the report given to the nurse coming on shift, called "bedside report"
- Reviews the Communication Board (white board) in the patient's room to be sure the goals and plans match the patient's
- Speaks up for the patient if they are unable to
- Participates in the discharge planning sessions

Communicates with Family and Friends

- Shares updates with friends and family as the patient wants
- Helps the patient stay connected with others through calls and emails
- Encourages the patient to use electronic devices and mobile apps to connect by video