

# Visitor policy Q&A

## **What is the new visitor policy?**

Beginning Wednesday, October 28, all visitors to Community Hospital and Westland House must be 18 years of age or older.

## **Why are people under 18 being restricted from entering the hospital and Westland House?**

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, H1N1 influenza is more likely to occur, and to be more serious, among children and young people. People can be infectious even before symptoms appear, so we are taking this extra precaution to protect patients, visitors, and staff.

## **How is Community Hospital implementing this policy?**

We are letting the public know about this change through the media, local doctors' offices, Community Hospital's web site, advertising, and signs that are posted at our entrances. Staff, volunteers, and/or Security at our entrances also will let visitors know as they arrive.

## **Will there be exceptions?**

There may be special circumstances such as a patient's condition when a visit is deemed critical to the family involved. We will work with families on a case-by-base basis in these special circumstances.

## **What if people aren't aware of the policy and arrive with visitors who are under 18?**

We will explain the policy and ask that younger visitors be taken home. If that is not feasible and depending on the urgency of the visit and the age of children, they may be asked to wait outside the building or in the lobby near the entrance with adult supervision while those 18 and over briefly visit.

## **Are you still treating patients who are younger than 18?**

Yes.

## **Does the restriction apply to the Emergency department?**

No. We strongly recommend that patients coming to the Emergency department make arrangements for childcare, but we know that can't always be done in emergency situations. Everyone who enters the Emergency department will be screened, and those with flu-like symptoms will be provided with a mask to wear.

## **Does the restriction apply to all other Community Hospital facilities?**

It only applies to the main hospital and to Westland House.

## **How will you enforce it?**

We hope that the public will understand that we are restricting visitors for the safety of our patients, staff, and all visitors, and to ensure that we have a healthy workforce of caregivers during this special flu season. People who would like to request special visiting privileges because a loved one is critically ill should contact the administrative supervisor at the main hospital or the charge nurse at Westland House to obtain permission prior to coming to the facility. If the request is approved, the administrative supervisor will notify Security.

## **How long will the policy be in place?**

We will evaluate the need for the age restriction throughout the flu season and rescind it when it is no longer considered necessary.

## **Are other hospitals doing this?**

Many other hospitals are restricting visits by children during this flu season.