

Learning About How Hospitals and Clinics Keep You Safe From COVID-19



Overview

Many hospitals and clinics now are treating people who are infected with COVID-19. So if you're in the hospital or clinic for any other reason, this may be an unsettling time. It's common to be concerned about becoming infected with the virus.

But hospitals and clinics have policies to prevent the spread of infections. For example, doctors and nurses are trained to wash their hands before they treat you. Health care centers have stepped up these policies now. They are taking further steps to protect their patients.

As long as COVID-19 remains a public health problem, things are going to be different when you go to a health care facility. They may have new rules for your safety. These could include having you wear a cloth face cover, meeting you outside the clinic, and having you sit away from others in the waiting room.

What are hospitals and clinics doing to keep you safe?

Your care team is very aware of the threat of COVID-19. They are doing everything they can to keep you safe. Hospitals and clinics may have different policies. But in general, you may expect many of these measures:

- You may be screened for COVID-19. When you come to the hospital, you may have your temperature taken. You'll be asked about any symptoms, such as a fever, a cough, or shortness of breath. You may be asked if you've had contact with anyone who's been diagnosed with the virus. And you may be asked if you've traveled to any place that has had an outbreak.
- The staff may try to do as much as possible outside the facility. For example, you may be asked to fill out paperwork online or in your car before you come inside. The person giving you a ride home may be asked to wait outside. These new rules to help protect you may make routine tasks take longer than usual.
- People who have COVID-19 may be treated in a separate area. Many hospitals and clinics have staff members who treat only these patients. This helps limit the spread of the infection.

- Visitors may be limited. In some cases, no visitors are allowed. In others, only one healthy visitor is allowed. Children may be limited to having only one adult with them. You can connect with family and friends using your phone or computer. If you need something brought from home, such as glasses or a phone charger, find out where the item can be dropped off.
- The hospital or clinic follows guidelines to prevent infection. These include:
 - Washing hands often.
 - Disinfecting high-touch surfaces.
 - Wearing face masks or other protective equipment.
 - Making extra space for social distancing.

What can you do to stay safe?

We all have a role to play in keeping ourselves safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Here are some things you can do while you're receiving care.

If you're in a hospital, stay in your room.

This will limit your exposure to the virus. It may be boring, but it's the safest place for you.

Wash your hands often.

Use soap and water, and scrub for 20 seconds. Then rinse and dry them well. Always wash them after you use the bathroom, before you eat, and after you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose. If you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitizer.

Speak up if you have safety concerns.

Don't be shy to correct health care workers if they aren't washing their hands properly, wearing face masks, or taking other precautions. These actions are vital to prevent the spread of infection.

Try to be understanding.

This is a stressful time for everyone, including your care team. They are doing their best to keep you safe and provide you with good care.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **A134** in the search box to learn more about **"Learning About How Hospitals and Clinics Keep You Safe From COVID-19"**.

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