

Chapter Four: Visiting Patients on the Transplant Unit

Purpose: To provide visitation guidelines which are designed to minimize the risk of transmission of bacterial, fungal, viral, and other infectious organisms from visitors to patients in the transplant unit.

Scope: These guidelines apply to the visitation of all patients undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplantation at the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center.

- I. General Guidelines**
- II. Overnight Visitation**
- III. Entering the Patient's Room**
- IV. Items Taken into the Patient's Room**
- V. Use of the Patient's Restroom**
- VI. The Neutropenic Patient**
- VII. Visitation during Physician Rounds**
- VIII. Visitor Restriction or Removal**
- IX. Exceptions**
- X. References**

University of Kentucky Markey Center
Patient Care Standards
Chapter 4: Visiting Patients on the Transplant Unit

I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Authorization to Visit
 - 1. All visitors should notify the patient's nurse prior to entering the patient's room.
- B. Visitation Hours
 - 1. Visitors are allowed on the BMT Unit from 9:00 am until 9:00 pm, unless otherwise altered by the patient's physician or nurse
- C. Number of Visitors
 - 1. A maximum of 2 visitors are allowed in the patient's room at a time. This includes the primary visitor.
- D. Allowed Visitors
 - 1. A patient's nurse will assess all visitors for signs and symptoms of infectious diseases or organisms.
 - 2. Anyone with evidence of even a mild communicable illness or infection, or who has been exposed to one, will not be allowed to visit patients.
 - 3. Adults who meet the following requirements:
 - a) Have not received a live polio vaccine in the previous 3 months
 - b) Have not received live chicken pox vaccine in the previous 2 weeks
 - c) Have not been exposed to chicken pox in the previous 4 weeks
 - d) Do not have a fever, cold of any sort, cough, sneezing, conjunctivitis, sore throat, ear infection, wheezing, cold sores, or any skin rash.
 - e) Have not been exposed to TB
 - f) Do not have shingles
 - 4. Children who meet the following requirements:
 - a) Must be at least 10 years of age or receive special permission from staff
 - b) Children must be under the direct supervision of a responsible adult at all times. The responsible adult must not be the patient.
 - c) Have not received a live polio vaccine in the previous 3 months
 - d) Have not received live chicken pox vaccine in the previous 2 weeks
 - e) Have not been exposed to chicken pox in the previous 4 weeks
 - f) Do not have a fever, cold of any sort, cough, sneezing, conjunctivitis, sore throat, ear infection, wheezing, cold sores, or any skin rash.
 - g) Have not been exposed to TB
 - h) Do not have shingles
 - i) During the RSV/Flu season (December – March) children less than 10 years old may not visit patients in the transplant unit

II. OVERNIGHT VISITATION

- A. One primary visitor may stay with adult patients at all times, including overnight.
- B. It is recommended that children under the age of 10 have a primary caregiver at night.
- C. No one under 18 years old may stay overnight as a primary visitor.
- D. Overnight visitors may not stay in the waiting rooms or lobby areas.

III. ENTERING THE PATIENT'S ROOM

- A. Visitors will receive instructions from the nurse on how to enter and leave a patient's room.
- B. Instructions will include the donning and the removal of personal protective equipment as deemed necessary.
- C. All visitors will be instructed in thorough hand washing techniques.

University of Kentucky Markey Center
Patient Care Standards
Chapter 4: Visiting Patients on the Transplant Unit

IV. ITEMS TAKEN INTO THE PATIENT'S ROOM

- A. All items taken into the patient's room must be approved by the nurse.
- B. Visitors should not take food into the patient's room without prior consent of the nurse.
- C. Visitors should not take plants and flowers into the patient's room due to the risk of infection.
- D. Visitors will be asked to keep gifts to a minimum.
 - 1. Items in the room must be kept clean and therefore their number should be limited.
 - 2. Excess items in the room may interfere with aspects of care due to the limited space in patient rooms.
- E. Personal belongings should be left outside of the patient's room.
- F. The patient's primary visitor (or "support" person) is permitted to stay in the patient's room at all times if the patient so desires or if it is necessary due to confusion or severity of condition of the patient.
 - 1. This person may take his/her meals into the patient's room. However, others should refrain from eating in the patient's room.

V. USE OF THE PATIENT'S RESTROOM

- A. Visitors should not use the patient's restroom.
- B. Visitors must never use the patient's shower.

VI. THE NEUTROPENIC PATIENT

- A. When a patient has a low neutrophil count, he is said to be neutropenic.
- B. Children under 10 cannot visit the transplant patient's room until the patient's absolute neutrophil count (ANC) is greater than 500 for three consecutive days.
- C. Visitors should not use the patient's toilet.

VII. VISITATION DURING PHYSICIAN ROUNDS

- A. While physician are conducting rounds, visitors may stay in the room with the patient's permission.
- B. Visitors should not exit or enter the room during rounding to protect patient confidentiality.

VIII. VISITOR RESTRICTION OR REMOVAL

- A. In some instances, it is necessary to restrict access to diagnostic and therapeutic procedure areas for health and safety reasons.
- B. If the staff decides to restrict visitation, the patient will receive an explanation.
- C. Visitors will be asked to leave the premises if they become disruptive or interfere with the general comfort and care of other patients, visitors, or staff.

IX. EXCEPTIONS

- A. The visitation policy may be modified when necessary to protect the health and safety of patients or visitors.

X. REFERENCES:

- A. Infection Control Policy 2103.01: Bone Marrow Transplant, Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, Medical College of Virginia Hospitals and Physicians, 2001
- B. Patient Visitation Policy, The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, 2008
- C. Rees LFH, Open All Night? Visiting Hours on Bone Marrow Transplantation Units. *Transplant Nursing* 2005; 11:98-99.
- D. Rules for Visiting the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, University of California San Francisco, 2008
http://www.ucsfhealth.org/childrens/medical_services/cancer/bmt/rules.html

Visitation Policy: BMT Units, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences University Hospital Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, 2007