

Institutional safety measures for hospitals



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As the COVID-19 pandemic has moved through its various phases, it has forced institutions such as hospitals to adapt by placing COVID-19 safety procedures and precautions in place.

Typical responses in hospitals include:



- People visiting hospitals by appointment are required to wear masks, have temperatures taken and complete contact sheets. Social distancing and hand hygiene is enforced.



- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided to all employees and doctors.
- All staff entering hospitals are required to undergo screening.



- Restricted visiting hours apply.



- Visitors must comply with any other protective measures (such as protective clothing) that may be required in particular units.



- Visits are banned to areas where confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients are being cared for.



- For critically ill patients in these treatment areas, visits will only be allowed after discussions between hospital managers and doctors treating the particular patient.



- Communication through electronic devices, such as video calls is allowed.



- Environmental cleaning is undertaken according to infection prevention standards.

Specific controls in various sections of hospitals where patients do not have COVID-19 infections include:



- **General wards:**
One visitor per day for a maximum of 30 minutes.



- **Paediatric Wards/ICU:**
One parent will be permitted to sleep-in with an admitted paediatric patient. The other parent will be permitted to visit for 30 minutes per day.



- **Nursery and Neonatal ICU:** Parents may visit together once a day. The duration of the visit will be at the discretion of the manager.



- **Adult ICUs:**
One visitor per day for a maximum of 30 minutes.

Maternity Ward controls:

Pre-admission requirements:

The recommendations of the SA Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists for expectant mothers as follows.



- Tests for COVID-19 from 38 weeks' gestation onwards (if possible at least 72 hours before admission).



- Self-isolation at home for at least seven days before the expected due date.

If admission is unplanned and urgent:



- A test is done on admission.



- If the mother-to-be is COVID-19 positive or their status is not known (for example, waiting for results with an unplanned admission), additional protective equipment will be worn by hospital employees and doctors.



- If an expectant mother tests positive for the virus, the spouse or partner may not accompany her to the hospital for the birth.

During a birth:



- Fathers and partners may be present but must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) supplied by the hospital during a baby's birth in a delivery room or theatre.



- A 'birth' visit is limited to the labour and delivery or Caesarean section until the mother is transferred to the ward.

After a birth:



- Only the father or partner can visit for an hour a day during the postnatal period until discharge.

References

<https://www.lifehealthcare.co.za/covid-19-coronavirus/support-and-self-care/>
<https://www.mediclinic.co.za/en/corporate/we-re-here-for-you/what-to-expect-when-going-in-for-elective-surgery.html>