

POLICY

HOSPITAL/HEALTH CENTRE VISITORS

Applicable to: MidCentral District Health Board	Issued by: General Manager MidCentral Health
	Contact: Customer Relations Co-ordinator

1. PURPOSE

To ensure a consistent approach is taken when members of the public enter any hospital or health centre owned by MidCentral District Health Board (MDHB) that:

- Maintains a balance between the individual needs and rights of the patient/client and the rights and security of other patients/clients.
- Enables patients and employees to be safe, and the security of the organisation's assets maintained.
- Communicates to the public/visitors when they are able to visit and the conduct expected of them.

Philosophy

MidCentral District Health Board recognises the important role that family/whanau and friends play in supporting patients during their stay in our facilities. We also recognise the need to maintain the balance between the family/whanau/support person's right to visit at times that suit them and the organisation's need to ensure patient privacy, provide timely and appropriate health care and maintain a safe environment.

Principles of Partnership, Participation and Protection encompassed in the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti O Waitangi shall be met where possible and practicable.

Patient care, and staff and patient safety are of paramount importance to MidCentral District Health Board. To ensure the safety of patients and staff, set visiting hours are established with all facilities made secure between the hours of 8pm and 7am (2000 hrs and 0700 hrs).

MidCentral Health has a zero tolerance to inappropriate behaviour e.g. violence, bad language.

Patients need adequate rest to help them recuperate. Visiting hours and arrangements reflect this need, and patient's visitors are asked to be aware and considerate of this.

2. SCOPE

Inclusion

- All MidCentral District Health Board staff
- Sub contractors
- Visiting members of the public
- Palmerston North Hospital site

- Horowhenua Health Centre
- Volunteers/honorary staff
- Students working within MCH

Exclusion

- Independent practitioners (in accordance with individual contracts)
- Business visitors

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

All MidCentral Health Staff

Staff are expected to:

- Be knowledgeable about MDHB's Hospital/Health Centre Visitors Policy and should ensure all visitors are made aware of it.
- Ensure visitors, where applicable, display a valid MDHB visitor's pass.
- Inform visitors of any hazards or special requirements in the area they are visiting.
- Ensure visitors are not left unattended in an area which is posted with entry restrictions.
- Challenge any person not displaying a visitor's pass in any restricted non-public area.
- Notify security of any suspicious or non-compliant visitors.

Charge Nurses/Nurse in Charge/After Hours Coordinators

- Approve/decline requests from visitors to stay after visitor hours/overnight with the situation being reviewed daily.
- Inform the family/whanau member/support person that this approval will be granted on a daily basis, by the Charge Nurse/Nurse in Charge or After Hours Coordinator.
- Ensure that the names of family members/whanau members/support persons visiting after 8pm (2000 hrs) are documented on the white board at the nursing station.
- Gain approval from Operational Management Team to vary visiting times.

Communication Unit

- Publish visiting hours in community and daily newspapers throughout the MDHB district, and review as required.

Hospital Facility Security Team

- Issue temporary visitors' labels to family/whanau/support persons who have gained permission from a Charge Nurse/Nurse in Charge or After Hours Coordinator to stay after the hour of 8pm (2000 hrs), and ensure that the visitors' register is signed.

Patient Visitors

- To comply with patient visitor's responsibilities and health and safety information as contained in Information Brochure ([Appendix 2](#))

4. POLICY

4.1 Visiting patients

- General visiting hours are between 2pm and 8pm (1400 hrs and 2000 hrs), seven days a week, with the exception of ICU, CCU, Neonates, Children's Ward, Ward 21 and Ward 23.
- Extended visiting hours are facilitated in ICU, CCU, Neonates, Children's Ward, Ward 21 and Ward 23 and are documented as per [\(Appendix 1\)](#)
- From 8pm to 7am (2000 hrs to 0700 hrs) all wards and external doors within each facility will be locked to provide security for staff and patients. The only entrance to the Palmerston North Hospital during these hours is through the Emergency Department entrance via Security. Access to Horowhenua Health Centre after hours is gained by ringing the door bell at the Main Entrance
- Visiting between 8pm and 7am (2000 hrs and 0700 hrs) will be facilitated in special circumstances after permission has been gained from the Charge Nurse/Nurse in Charge/After Hours Coordinator.
- Access to, and conduct within, the organisation's premises will be monitored, having consideration for the rights of all patients/clients, staff and other visitors.
- Visitors are to be made aware are not to visit MidCentral Health if they are suffering from any infectious conditions e.g. cold or flu.
- Children must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible person who will ensure the child's safety in the Ward/Department at all times.
- When using a cell phone or other technologies, including cameras, consideration should be exercised with respect to the privacy and confidentiality of patients, visitors and staff.
- Visitors are expected to comply with the requirements of all notices and instructions from staff within the facility they are visiting.
- Visitors are expected to follow the visitor's guideline as displayed throughout the facilities and in the facility information brochure. [\(Appendix 2\)](#)

Overnight Stays

- In circumstances where it may be necessary or advantageous to have one family/whanau member/support person stay with a patient over night, approval must be obtained from the Charge Nurse/Nurse in Charge/or the After Hours Coordinator.
- The family/whanau member/support person must be fully informed that this approval will be granted on a daily basis, with the situation being reviewed daily by the Charge Nurse/Nurse in Charge or After Hours Coordinator. When circumstances have changed, approval may be revoked.
- In some extenuating circumstances permission may be given for more than one person to stay with a patient.
- Patient visitors who stay over night will be informed that no meals will be provided, and that they are unable to use the bathroom facilities in the ward. Visitors shall be advised of alternative options.

4.2 General Security Requirements

- Security is to be notified of any unaccompanied visitors on site after the normal sign in/out reception areas are closed.
- Security is to be notified of any suspicious or non-compliant visitors.
- Visitors who are not authorised or are not welcome by any patient or staff members should be asked to leave.
- Where non-compliance with this policy is observed, the visitors involved shall be informed of MidCentral's expectations of their compliance with this policy. Should there be continued non-compliance then the visitors are to be requested to leave the premises. Security is to be contacted if the visitors fail to leave the premises when asked, or if visitors become confrontational. A trespass notice may be issued in some instances at the discretion of security.

4.3 Health and Safety

- Patient visitors arriving after normal visiting hours are to be made aware of the guidelines they are required to comply with while on site. An information sheet is to be provided to them outlining their responsibilities in relation to security and emergencies. ([Appendix 2](#))

4.4 Reporting Hazards/Accidents/Near Miss Incidents

- Visitors must ensure any hazards observed or created which could endanger other persons or property, or any accident or near miss incident observed or suffered, is promptly reported to MidCentral staff.

4.5 MidCentral District Health Board Staff

- Visiting times as described in this policy are also applicable to any MDHB staff members. MDHB staff access cards are issued for purposes of carrying out duties during their hours of work and are not to be used to gain access to the hospital after-hours for the purposes of visiting. The after-hours access procedure for visiting described in this policy also applies to MDHB staff.

5. DEFINITIONS

Patient Visitor	Any family/whanau member/support person/friend visiting any in-patient.
After Hours Patient Visitor	Any family/whanau member/support person/friend visiting any in-patient between the hours of 8pm and 7am (2000 hrs and 0700 hrs) Monday to Sunday.
Support	Types of assistance required by individuals to maintain independence, prevent institutionalisation or cope with a condition that may be deteriorating. Also the action of enabling, encouraging, making possible, assisting through various means, physical, emotional, verbal, resources.
Visitor's Pass	A sticky label issued to patient visitor/support person visiting after 8pm (2000 hrs).

Restricted Area	Any area defined by signage or by staff as restricted and/or as authorised entry only.
Business Visitor	Any person who is invited by any MDHB representative - this includes suppliers/vendors, guest speakers, media, dignitaries, visiting health professionals etc.
Sub Contractor	A person engaged (other than as an employee) by any contractor or sub-contractor to do for gain or reward any work the contractor or sub-contractor has been engaged (as contractor or sub-contractor) to do.

6. RELATED MDHB DOCUMENTS

MDHB-2009	Statement of Rights [Policy]
MDHB-2010	Statement of Responsibilities [Policy]
MDHB- 1949	Access and Accommodation [Policy]
MDHB- 2877	Staying Overnight in Antenatal / Postnatal Ward [Policy]
MDHB-4313	Neonatal Unit Boarder Mothers [Guideline]
MDHB- 4876	Children's Ward – Boarder Children [Policy]
MDHB- 2055	Staying at Te Whare Rapuora [Guideline]
MDHB -2000	Identity Access Cards [Policy]
MDHB -2861	Contractors Quality/Risk/Health & Safety Requirements [Policy]
MDHB-2020	Cellular Phones/Radio Transmitters Use [Policy]

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Specialist Unit Visiting Hours
Appendix 2	Information for Visitors to MidCentral Health
Appendix 3	All After Hours Visitors Flow Chart

8. KEYWORDS

Visitor, Whanau member, Support person

Appendix 1

Specialist Unit Visiting Hours

Ward 30 Intensive Care Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visiting between 8am and 11am (2000 hrs and 1100 hrs)
Ward 28 Critical Care Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open visiting 3pm - 8pm (1500 hrs - 2000 hrs)
Ward 23 Oncology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open visiting 7am - 8pm (0700 hrs - 2000 hrs). When visiting patients in isolation, visitors must check with nursing staff and comply with any requests.
Children's Ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents/Guardians: Open visiting during day One parent/guardian at night by arrangement with Charge Nurse. Siblings/Relatives/Friends may visit between: 10am - 12pm (1000 hrs – 1200hrs) and; 2pm - 7.30pm (1400 hrs – 1930 hrs)
Women's Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Husbands, Partners, siblings and Grandparents of the baby between 10am – 6pm (1000 hrs – 1800 hrs). Other visitors are welcome from 2pm – 6pm (1400 hrs – 1800 hrs) daily.
Neo Natal Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, grandparents and siblings of the baby are welcome at any time. Other visitors, accompanied by one of the baby's parents, between 2pm and 8pm (1400 hrs and 2000 hrs) Other children under 12 are NOT permitted.
Ward 21 (Mental Health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open visiting by arrangement with the Charge Nurse, Nurse in Charge.
Day of Surgery Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One support person allowed per patient between 7am and 7.30pm (0700 hrs and 1930 hrs).
Operating Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children: a Guardian/ Parent / Care Giver may accompany the child to patient reception, OT. At the discretion of the Anaesthetist a Guardian / Parent / Care Giver may be present for the induction, and then will wait in the designated area. Women having a Caesarean Section may have one support person. The support person may be asked to leave if the patient requires a general anaesthetic or an emergency situation develops.
Post Anaesthetic Care Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One support person may be allowed into the unit, at discretion of Nurse in Charge, they may be asked to leave as/when necessary.
HOROWHENUA HEALTH CENTRE, LEVIN	
Ward 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Visiting from: 10am – 11.45am (1000hrs – 1145 hrs) 2pm – 4.45pm (1400 hrs – 1645 hrs) 6pm – 8.30pm (1800 hrs – 2031 hrs)

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS' VISITORS TO PALMERSTON NORTH HOSPITAL AND HOROWHENUA HEALTH CENTRE

MidCentral Health is committed to providing a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors.

All patients' visitors must be aware of, and comply with, Health and Safety requirements and any other MDHB guidelines to ensure this.

Please read this information sheet and comply with its requirements when visiting our facilities.

Visiting Hours

1. Hospital visiting hours are from 2pm to 8pm (1400 hrs to 2000 hrs) seven days a week. Some specialist units may allow visiting at times other than these, but it is at the discretion of the nurse in charge of the unit at the time.
2. All patient visitors should check with staff as to the availability of the patient they wish to visit, as at times patients may be required to have treatment or procedures during visiting times.

After-Hours Visiting and Access

3. Visiting after 8pm (2000 hrs) will be facilitated in special circumstances, after permission has been gained from the Charge Nurse/Nurse in Charge/After Hours Coordinator.
4. All people visiting after-hours must wear a visitor's pass provided by security and sign the Visitors' Register. At the conclusion of their visit, they must report back to security to sign out of the Visitors' Register. The security staff are located in the corridor to the right of the Emergency Department.
5. After 8pm (2000 hrs) all external ward doors will be closed to provide security for staff and patients. All external doors will be locked with the exception of the Emergency Department entrance. Entry to the hospital after 8pm (2000 hrs) must be through these doors.

Number of Visitors

6. Patients should have no more than two visitors at their bedside at any one time. When more than two visitors wish to visit at the same time, if practicable, the visit should be held in the patient lounge.

Behaviour

7. Visitors are to act in an orderly manner, having consideration for the rights and safety of all patients/clients, staff and other visitors.
8. Visitors are expected to comply with the requirements of all notices and instructions from staff within the facility they are visiting. They will be asked to leave should there be evidence of continued failure to abide by any MDHB policies.
9. Any form of aggressive behaviour (includes verbal abuse) will not be tolerated. Security and/or Police will be called and the person(s) asked to leave.

Children

10. Children must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible person who will ensure the child's safety on the Ward/Department at all times.

Cold, Flu and Other Infectious Conditions

11. Visitors are requested not to visit patients in hospital if the visitor(s) is suffering from any infectious condition, eg cold or flu.

Withdrawal of Visiting Rights

12. MidCentral District Health Board reserves the right to withdraw any visiting rights to its premises at any time.

Restricted Areas

13. Entry into staff areas or designated restricted areas is not permitted. If in doubt, please ask at reception or ask a staff member.

Use of Cell Phones and Other Technologies

14. When using cell phones or other technologies, including cell phone cameras, consideration should be exercised in respect of the privacy and confidentiality of patients, visitors and staff.
15. Cell phones, cellular linked computers, PDA's and other similarly cellular linked technologies are prohibited from use in restricted areas such as: Operating Theatres, ICU, CCU and the Emergency Department, as the electromagnetic interference created by these technologies, may cause electronic monitoring, diagnostic and treatment equipment to operate incorrectly. These technologies can be used in other areas of the hospital except within two metres of any electronic equipment.

Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs, Weapons, Gang Patches and Insignia

16. M has a smoke free policy for all buildings and grounds.
17. Alcohol, illegal drugs or weapons are not permitted on site.
18. Gang patches and insignia re not permitted to be worn in any MidCentral District Health Board facilities.

Emergencies such as Fire

19. If you hear a continuous sounding of the fire alarm follow the directions of wardens – they will be wearing brightly coloured vests. If you are in a non-staffed area – leave the building immediately via the nearest marked exit.
20. Should you discover a fire:
 - Remove anyone from immediate danger
 - Activate the nearest fire alarm
 - Close doors to contain the fire and smoke
 - Notify a staff member
 - Follow evacuation procedures (refer to 'fire action' notices posted on walls).
21. In all other emergencies, follow the directions of staff.

Appendix 3

ALL AFTER HOURS VISITORS/SUPPORT PERSON(S) FLOWCHART

