

Hospital Visitor Tip Sheet for Individuals with Disabilities Who Need a Support Person

Hospitals may now have “no-visitor” policies because of COVID-19. These policies may say that *only* the patient can come into the hospital. However, some people with disabilities need someone to accompany them for support. If you need someone to be with you while you are in the hospital, take these steps:

- **Check the hospital’s website.** Most hospitals have exceptions to their “no-visitor” policies for children and people who need support in the hospital. Once you find the hospital’s policy, make sure you can show it to someone that works for the hospital when you get there. You can find an abbreviated list of links to Tennessee hospital’s policies [at this site](#).
- **Call ahead.** It is a good idea to call your health care provider before you go to the hospital if you think you may have COVID-19. When you call, ask about the hospital’s visitor policy and ask to bring your support person with you. If you are going to the hospital for something other than COVID-19, you should still call ahead.
- **Make the Case.** Let the hospital staff know what activities you need support for and why your support person is important for those tasks. Make sure the hospital staff knows that bringing your support person will reduce the strain on the nursing staff and improve your quality of care.
- **Talk to the Nursing Supervisor.** If the person you are talking to doesn’t know about the hospital’s visitor policy, ask to talk to the Nursing Supervisor or another supervisor.
- **Get it in your Chart.** You can ask the hospital staff to write in your medical chart that you are allowed to have a support person with you. This may help reduce future struggles to allow your support person to accompany you.

You may want to know that there could be restrictions on support people while they are in the hospital. Support people may be required to wear a mask or other protective equipment in the hospital or may not be allowed to go to the cafeteria. There may be restrictions on how many support people are allowed into your room at one time. Additionally, hospitals may require support people to take a COVID-19 test, fill out a questionnaire, or have their temperatures taken.

Call DRT 800-342-1660 if your hospital’s “no-visitor” policy doesn’t have any exceptions or if they won’t approve your exception. Their decision may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Council on
Developmental Disabilities