

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**30 April 2020**

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**Visiting restrictions to Nelson Marlborough Health hospitals revised**

More people are now allowed to visit patients in Wairau and Nelson hospitals under a revised visitors' policy relating to the COVID-19 alert levels.

One family member or support person may now visit one patient at a time.

Lexie O'Shea, Incident Controller, Hospital Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) for COVID-19 says the protection of staff and patients is still a high priority during Alert Level 3. The continued restricted visitor access is part of measures that all New Zealand hospitals are taking to minimise the risk of COVID-19 by reducing the numbers of people that move through hospitals.

"I appreciate it has been a difficult time for many families with patients in hospital," she says. "In usual circumstances our staff are very supportive of families visiting as part of the planned care for our patients and the change in policy for visiting has been challenging," she says.

Where possible, family and whanau are encouraged to keep in touch with patients in hospital by text, video calls, social media or phone calls.

Under the policy:

- visitors will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms
- anyone with symptoms, or who has had contact with a confirmed or probable cases in the last 14 days, will not be allowed to enter
- visitors' names and contact details will be registered
- visiting hours are between 2.30pm and 8.30pm Monday to Sunday, unless there is a prior arrangement with the ward charge nurse manager
- visitors must enter through the main doors at each hospital
- children under 16 are not permitted to visit
- visitors must follow Alert Level 3 precautions: wash or sanitise their hands thoroughly before and after visiting, and maintain two metre physical distancing. If the person you are visiting is not in your bubble you are required to follow Alert Level 3 rules and keep a 2m distance from the person (no touching)
- visitors are asked not to bring flowers, but food or a book is ok

- only one person may enter the building, after screening, to collect a patient.

In maternity wards women may include one person for labour and birth support and one visitor per day while they are an inpatient in an antenatal or postnatal ward.

### **Information for outpatients (people with hospital appointments)**

People should attend their scheduled appointments at the hospital unless they have been contacted and told otherwise, or if they are unwell, in which case they should ring to re-schedule. They may bring a support person to a clinic appointment if support is required.

NMH will monitor and review the policy measures as required.

For more information on the latest Nelson Marlborough Health news please see:

[www.nmdhb.govt.nz/covid-19](http://www.nmdhb.govt.nz/covid-19)

**Ends**

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