



## Information about visiting the hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Update for patients and relatives (25<sup>th</sup> of October 2022)

Visiting restrictions remain in place in St James's Hospital due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions are in place to protect patients, visitors and staff and to ensure the hospital can continue to provide vital services for all patients. Visiting is facilitated only in limited pre-arranged circumstances. Visiting is subject to the hospital's ability to facilitate safe visiting.

**The hospital acknowledges that these visiting restrictions are difficult for patients, their family and friends.** However, the hospital is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all patients and has put many measures in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and limited visiting is one of these measures. Most patients, visitors and staff are now vaccinated, but we do know that vaccinations do not provide full protection, and many of our patients are extremely vulnerable due to their illness. Visiting restrictions are also in place to protect visitors because COVID-19 remains present in the hospital. For all these reasons, the hospital cannot at this point permit open visiting as we knew it before the pandemic. For more updated information please refer to: <https://www.stjames.ie/patients/visiting/>

#### Visiting in pre-arranged circumstances

The hospital facilitates visiting in pre-arranged circumstances only. Your healthcare team will discuss with you how visiting can be facilitated. Visiting in pre-arranged circumstances requires careful planning and is subject to the ward being able to facilitate safe visiting.

**As a patient you can help** to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in this hospital by:

- Wearing a face mask when you are away from your bedside.
- Regularly washing your hands and performing hand hygiene, using the alcohol gel provided.
- Not meeting friends or family on the hospital grounds and not entering the car of a visitor. We know that this is associated with a high risk of COVID-19 transmission.

**As a visitor you can help** to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in this hospital by:

- NOT visiting the hospital if you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (fever, dry cough, fatigue, cold or flu like) or if you are required to self-isolate or restrict your movements for any reason.
- Wearing a face mask at all times while in the hospital.
- Regularly washing your hands and performing hand hygiene, using the alcohol gel provided.

## **Staying in touch with your family and friends**

We regret that you cannot have more regular visits from family and friends. Please remember that there are other ways to stay in contact with them:

- Make sure you have access to your own phone, including a phone charger.
- Phone your family and friends regularly, so they know how you are doing.
- You can also try to video call them through FaceTime, Skype or WhatsApp. The hospital's free Wi-Fi service is available in most areas.
- If you do not have your own electronic device to make a video call, please ask the staff on your ward who will be happy to arrange a video call for you. Mobile devices are available on the ward.
- You could also write a letter or a card. The clerk on your ward will post it for you.
- Tell your healthcare team if you are finding it hard not seeing your family or friends.

## **How can I get personal belongings?**

Your family or friends can drop personal belongings into hospital for you. Patient belongings can be dropped off or collected from 12-6pm every day at the [Blue Canopy Area](#) near the main entrance. Your belongings are then delivered to you on your ward between 4pm and 8pm. You can also send home items you no longer need through the same way.

## **What if my family needs to talk to the doctor or nurse?**

Ask your family to phone the nurse manager [of your ward](#) to speak with them or a doctor on your healthcare team. Please let the ward manager know that it is okay for the doctor or nurse to talk with your family about your care.

## **How do I or my family organise a pre-arranged visit?**

Please ask the ward nurse manager how to arrange a visit or ask your family member to phone the ward nurse manager to arrange a visit. **Only pre-booked visitors will be admitted to the hospital.**

The visiting restrictions in place at St James's Hospital are in line [National Guidelines](#) and are constantly under review by hospital management. **These guidelines are subject to the ability of the hospital to manage visiting safely.**

**We thank you for your understanding and your support in reducing the spread of COVID-19.**

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### **Reference:**

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/guidanceforhealthcareworkers/acutehospitalguidance/InfectionPreventionandControlPrecautionsforAcuteSettings.pdf>

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