

August 24, 2020

Dear Health Centre Visitor

SUBJECT: Visitors and Use of Non-Medical Masks

The presence of family and caregivers is integral to the healing and overall health and well-being of patients in hospitals and health centres across Manitoba. As COVID-19 is expected to be a part of our 'new normal', efforts are underway to find a longer-term balance between preventing the spread of this virus and ensuring we are able to ensure safe interaction between patients and their loved ones.

As we approach respiratory illness season, all health-care facilities in Manitoba are preparing to implement a requirement that all visitors wear non-medical masks for the duration of their visit(s). This requirement will take effect September 1, 2020 and will apply to all who visit health-care facilities, **designated support persons, general visitors, tradespeople and vendors, and outpatients** attending medical appointments.

With the exception of specific exemptions made on a case-by-case basis, visitors who are not wearing a mask will not be admitted.

Note: At health care facilities within the Prairie Mountain Health Region, masks are mandatory effective August 24, 2020 as a result of the region's ORANGE Pandemic Response Level.

Visitors are asked to provide and wear their own mask. Cloth and other non-medical masks are acceptable and readily available in most communities. In situations where a designated support person does not have access to a mask (due to an emergency or equity-related situation) the facility will provide a mask to be worn.

Medical masks will only be provided where the circumstances of the visitor and/or the patient require their use. Refer to: COVID-19 Inpatient Visitation Principles: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-inpatient-visit-principles.pdf>.

We will continue to assess the impact and need for additional measures as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves and remain thankful for the cooperation and understanding of family members as we take every measure to protect you, your loved one(s) and our staff.