

A COMMUNICATION GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES IN THE HOSPITAL

We know how important you are in the healing of your loved one. The following guide is intended to help you to stay informed and help you support them along the way.

STAY INFORMED ON VISITATION GUIDELINES –

Visitation guidelines exist to keep our patients and caregivers safe. During the pandemic, our up-to-date guidance can be found [here](#) (link) and is accessible from our COVID-19 landing page at clevelandclinic.org/coronavirus. We are grateful for your patience and partnership.

GET CONNECTED TO YOUR LOVED ONE'S MYCHART VIA PROXY ACCESS –

Patients with a MyChart account can identify individuals they designate to receive full access to information released in MyChart via the Proxy Access feature. This proxy has the same viewing permissions as the patient and it cannot be restricted; therefore, it is only available when a patient specifically grants such access. This can help family members receive test results and read notes in MyChart as soon they are available.

USE TECHNOLOGY – Communication is key, and we have created multiple ways to help make it happen despite social and physical distancing requirements at our hospitals. Besides using a patient's bedside hospital phone, patients and their loved ones can connect via AmWellNow, FaceTime, Google Hangouts and Skype on their personal devices. If your loved one doesn't have a personal device, we can help them schedule a time for a video call using one of our unit devices. Find instructions [here](#).

LABEL PHONE AND CHARGER – As patient care needs may require room reassignments during hospitalization, important technology may get misplaced. Please label phones and chargers to ensure these communication tools remain with their owner — this also applies to a patient's clothing and other belongings.

IDENTIFY A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT –

Designate one individual who clinicians can call to share important updates. Please consider making this person the legally authorized representative (i.e. someone who is able to make decisions for your loved one if they are unable) and someone who is able to communicate updates to other loved ones.

KEEP A LIST OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS –

Stressful situations like hospitalizations can make it difficult to focus on what is most important. Your team should be providing a daily update on the care plan, and this could be a good opportunity to ask questions. Keeping a list of important questions helps ensure nothing is forgotten during conversations with caregivers. You can focus the conversation by asking questions like, *"What's most important to me to cover today is..."* or *"I am most worried about..."*

TALK ABOUT WISHES – If your loved one has been admitted, we want to honor their care wishes, including End of Life wishes. Please share any

advance care planning paperwork with the care team. (If you need the paperwork, it can be found [here](#).) If you have not had the conversation, it can be initiated with a phrase as simple as “I need to think about the future, will you help me?” You can visit theconversationproject.org for tips on this important conversation.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT, WE ARE HERE FOR

YOU – We will take the best possible care of you or your loved one. We also want to make sure you feel supported in all the ways you need.

For spiritual care and bereavement support at anytime, call 216-444-2518.

CELEBRATE WHEN WE CAN – Visit the [kudoboard](#) to post encouraging messages for caregivers. You may also complete [this form](#) to write an inspiring letter we will then send to a caregiver — remember to include the caregiver’s name to ensure we can recognize them in a way they will appreciate.