



St Helens and Knowsley
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust



Supporting families
and carers during
end of life care

Introduction

We appreciate that this will be a very anxious and overwhelming time for you and that you may have questions about losing your loved one.

This leaflet will help to answer those questions and explain some of the systems introduced at our hospital during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Unfortunately, in order to reduce the risk of the spread of infection, we have had to restrict the number of people visiting our hospitals.

Whilst we want to maintain family contact and support for our patients who are receiving end of life care, we need to do this in a way that protects not just the patients and our staff, but also the people visiting our hospitals, as well as the wider public.

Relatives of those receiving end of life care will be supported to visit their loved ones as per the Trust's current visiting guidelines.

To arrange a visit, please speak with the nurse in charge of your loved one's care. All visits must be agreed in advance and any exceptions to this MUST be approved by the nurse in charge prior to any visits.

Our staff are here to support you, and they will explain the risks of catching Coronavirus yourself and also the risks of spreading it to others you may live with or come into contact with.

We know that some people are more vulnerable to Coronavirus than others. It is advised if you fall into one of the below categories

that you do not visit a relative who has or is suspected of having the virus:

- Pregnant
- Over 70 years of age
- Have an underlying health condition and/or have a weakened immune system (if you are unsure ward staff will advise)
- Are very overweight (a BMI of 40 or over)

When you come onto the ward

Staff will:

- Ask that you wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds or clean with hand sanitising gel both before and at the end of your visit.
- Ensure you are wearing protective equipment correctly to protect yourself and others (you must wear a new apron, gloves and face mask each time you visit).
- Help you remove and dispose of protective equipment safely at the end of your visit.
- Ensure that you wash your hands after removing the protective equipment.
- Advise you on where to sit and how close you can be

We ask that you to keep your visit as brief as you can. This is to reduce the risk of exposing yourself to Coronavirus.

Please follow instructions from staff on how to put on and remove your protective equipment and dispose of it safely.

If you follow our staff's guidance and wear the protective equipment that is provided, you may not have to self-isolate when you go home. If advice is not followed however, you are putting yourself and those around you at risk and you may need to self-isolate from others i.e. relatives & friends once you go home for a period of 14 days. This may have implications on you being able to make bereavement arrangements.

We ask that you do not visit if you are showing symptoms of Coronavirus or if you are living in a household with someone showing symptoms, such as a high temperature or sudden persistent cough.

Hospital Chaplains are available to visit patients and offer any support needed. Please ask the nurse in charge to contact them through the switchboard.

These restrictions have not been imposed lightly, but we believe they are necessary to keep our staff and patients as safe as possible from the risk of infection.

How can I cope?

Nobody knows you better than yourself, and you will find your own unique ways of coping.

Looking after your physical health is an essential part of getting through difficult times. Getting enough sleep and eating properly can help you deal with the different emotions you are feeling.

For some people:

- Keeping busy doing different activities at home that can help. If that helps you, try to do things even if sometimes you don't feel up to it.

- Taking things more slowly and taking time out of your day-to-day life and activities may be what is needed.
- Walking under the current guidelines can be difficult however even if it's in your garden this can be helpful as it gets you out of the house, provides some physical exercise and may help you to think differently.
- Telephone conversations or face timing other people can help, even if you're not ready to engage with them, especially if you are feeling lonely.
- Most people find it helps to talk through their feelings. If you feel that you don't want to talk, that is ok but it is important to find other ways to manage your feelings.

Family members may have different ways of coping which can create tensions and strains within a family. If this happens, you need to try to find a way to be sensitive to each other's needs, whilst dealing with your own feelings in your own way.

We thank our patients and their loved ones for their understanding and support during this time.

You may find these organisations helpful

For adults

www.gov.uk

Gives information about registering a death, wills, benefits and lots more.

Samaritans

Provides emotional support 24 hours a day.

call: 116 123

Bereavement UK

Bereavement UK offers information about death, dying, bereavement, funerals and self-help counselling.

visit: www.bereavement.co.uk

Bereavement Advice Centre

Provides information, advice and signposting on the practical concerns

that people face following a death.

visit: www.bereavementadvice.org

Cruse Bereavement Care

Provides information, advice, counselling and support for anyone dealing with bereavement.

visit: www.cruse.org.uk call: 0808 808 1677

The Compassionate Friends

Provides support and friendship for bereaved parents and their families

by those similarly bereaved. For parents who have lost a child of any age.

visit: www.tcf.org.uk call: 0345 123 2304



In the event of a loved one's death please contact our Bereavement Office the following day after 11am.

Tel: 0151 430 1336 our Bereavement Team will support you through this process

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic please do not visit the Bereavement Office.