Welcoming partners/companions to the antenatal and postnatal wards

Information for visitors

To ensure everyone’s safety, please read and sign this document if you would like to visit our antenatal and postnatal maternity wards.

Dear partner/companion

We know how important support from a partner is during the maternity journey. Therefore, we want you to be with your partner while still making sure that infection control and health and safety policies are being followed, so that everyone is safe.

We are now welcoming one partner/companion to the antenatal and postnatal wards. This person must be the same person throughout the mother’s stay in hospital. There are morning or afternoon four-hour visiting slots that you will be given.

To make sure everyone is kept safe, please read and agree to the points below by signing this document.

Infection control

Face mask/covering: You must always wear a face mask or covering at all times while in the hospital.

Screening: At the entrance to the maternity department we will ask for your name and contact phone number. We will also check your temperature.

Hand washing: Please wash your hands before and after you help care for the mother or the baby and when you enter or leave the ward. Please also use the hand gel provided frequently.

Symptoms: If at any time you have COVID-19 symptoms you must return home, self-isolate for 10 days and contact NHS 111 to arrange a test. Your household contacts should self-isolate for 14 days. This includes the mother, who will be tested for COVID-19 twice a week for two weeks, if in hospital.
Feeling unwell: If you have an illness such as a cold, flu or vomiting and diarrhoea, you cannot visit. This is for the safety of the mothers and babies. If you need more information, please speak to the midwife in charge.

Alcohol or drugs: Anyone who is perceived to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed to stay.

Safety

Your visit: Please stay by your partner’s bedside, within the bedside markings and leave the ward promptly at the end of your visiting period.

Babies: Babies must stay with their mother at all times; please do not take your baby out of the ward area. Sometimes babies need to go to the neonatal unit for antibiotics; you may transport babies to this unit, with the agreement of the midwife.

Fire: If the fire alarm rings please follow instructions given by ward staff. Do not leave the ward unless told to do so.

In an emergency: If there is an emergency involving your partner or baby that requires immediate medical attention, please stay calm, stand back and let the medical team help until the emergency situation is over. A member of staff will provide information and support following the emergency.

Security: Anyone who is verbally or physically abusive to staff will not be allowed to stay. The Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust operates a policy of zero tolerance for violent, disruptive and aggressive behaviour. If there are any concerns for the physical safety of mothers and babies, or staff on the ward, the security team will be called.

We reserve the right to decline permission for partners/companions to stay on the ward at any time. We will ask partners/companions to leave if there are significant concerns about the safety of mothers, babies and staff on duty.

Facilities

Toilets: You cannot use the toilet in the ward bays but will need to use the specially allocated visitors’ toilets on 5 South ward or Victoria ward.

Food and drink: Please bring sufficient food and drink and other essential items to reduce the number of occasions needed to leave the ward area. You can use the cold drinks vending machine in the visitors’ room.

General

Staff on the ward are responsible for all women and babies and at times will need to prioritise the care they give. Please alert a member of staff if help is required urgently.

If you have any concerns or worries regarding your partner’s or baby’s welfare, please ask to speak to the midwife in charge or the matron in charge of the ward.
Thank you for your co-operation.

More information
For more information about the maternity service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/maternity-services

Your feedback
If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

Alternative formats
This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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