

Infection Prevention and Control

Pet Visitation – Personal and Pet Therapy Policy	Section: Patient Care
Effective Date: July 8, 2021	Original Date: September 13, 2013 Revised Date: February 20, 2015, Revised Date: June, 2016 Revised Date: April, 2021

Statement: Headwaters Health Care Centre (Headwaters) is committed to providing evidence-based information to provide guidance and optimize safety.

Policy Statement:

Pets may be brought into Headwaters for visitation in two situations:

- As part of the pet therapy program offered by the activation staff using a specifically trained pet therapy dog.
- A personal pet visiting an individual patient on E wing. Personal pet is to visit only their person and may not visit on obstetrics or the intensive care unit. A personal pet visitation to D or F wings will be given consideration on compassionate grounds (i.e palliative patient, long stay patient with close bond to animal).

Note: Trained service dogs are exempt from this policy. Service dogs in training are not exempt.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Any animal other than a dog is excluded.
2. Dogs may not visit patients whom are on additional precautions.

Definitions:

Handler: The owner or person wishing to accompany the pet for a visit.

Dog Therapy Visits: Provides patients the opportunity to engage in formal pet therapy programs with specially trained dogs and owners facilitated by the activation staff.

Personal Dog Visitation: Provides individual patients the opportunity to visit with a dog through family members or friends.

Procedural Steps:

- 1) All dogs and handlers must be registered through the Activationist on E Wing prior to the visit
- 2) Pet therapy dogs:
 - a) Dogs and handlers for the pet therapy program must be from a recognized therapy pet organization (e.g. Therapeutic Paws of Canada).
 - b) The handler wishing to accompany the pet must make an appointment annually with the Activationist to:
 - i. Complete a dog's information & waiver form
 - ii. Provide evidence of passing a therapy dog evaluation

- iii. Provide a current vaccination record and certificate of good health from a veterinarian
 - iv. Provide a copy of a vulnerable person's police record check
 - v. Provide occupational health and safety (OHS) with proof of vaccination of the handler for COVID-19, diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis, mumps, rubella, measles, varicella and annual influenza vaccines, and tuberculosis (TB) skin test.
- c) Dogs on a raw food diet are not permitted
 - d) The pet therapy dog will wear their dog vest at all times while visiting
 - e) All dogs and their handler must register in the pet visitation log at the nursing station before visiting
 - f) The Activationist will keep copies of the dog's information & waiver form, dog's vaccination certificate, and health records in the pet visitation binder located at the nursing station

3) All Dog handlers are responsible for:

- a) For cleaning their hands before they enter and exit the patient rooms/spaces.
- b) Controlling the dog's behaviour at all times.
- c) In the event that the dog soils the environment, collection and disposal of the dog's excretions.
 - i. Feces must be collected into a plastic bag and disposed in the regular waste stream.
 - ii. Notify a staff member to arrange for environmental services to disinfect the area where the pet soiled.

4) All dogs must be accompanied by their registered handlers at all times. Where feasible, dogs should be brought into the hospital in a carrying cage.

5) Personal Dogs:

- a) The handler wishing to accompany the pet must make an appointment with the Activationist to:
 - i. Complete a dog's information & waiver form,
 - ii. Provide a current vaccination record and certificate of good health from a veterinarian.
 - It is the responsibility of the handler of the pet to ensure the animal has a current vaccination certificate and is in good health.
- b) Dogs on a raw food diet are not permitted.
- c) Upon completion of the above criteria, the Activationist will issue a coloured bandana for the dog to wear while visiting in the hospital. Upon discharge of the personal dog's person, the bandana shall be returned to the Activationist.
- d) All dogs and their handler must register in the pet visitation log at the nursing station before visiting.
- e) The Activationist will keep copies of the dog's information & waiver form, dog's vaccination certificate, and health records in the dog visitation binder located the nursing station.
- f) For dogs visiting on compassionate grounds, if the Activationist is not available, the 24 hours Hospital Service Coordinator may be contacted, and the above process followed.

6) All dogs not in cages or let out of cages in the hospital must wear a flat collar or harness and a nylon or leather leash not exceeding six (6) feet while on hospital property. Extending "Flexi" leashes, choke chains, training collars, pinch collars, "Promise" collars, "Halti" collars and chain leashes are not permitted.

- 7) Dogs are not permitted in food preparation or storage rooms, dining rooms, medication preparation or storage rooms, clean/sterile supply storage rooms or the tub/bathroom.
- 8) Dogs are not permitted on patient's beds.
- 9) Patients with known allergies will be protected from the dog by having the dog and handler visit in a private room, or area elsewhere. Dog visitation is best conducted outside of the clinical areas.
- 10) The hospital will not be liable for any injury to or damage suffered by the dog. The handler of the dog shall be responsible and indemnify the hospital against all injury or damage to property or person, including all claims in respect thereof, caused by the dog while on hospital property.
- 11) The hospital reserves the right to withdraw the privileges of dog visitation at any time under the following circumstances:
- a) The handler does not comply with this policy/procedure.
 - b) The dog's behaviour is unacceptable as defined by the hospital.
 - c) The dog is unwell, incontinent or unkempt and poses a communicable disease risk.
- 12) In the event of a violation of this policy, as above, the following process will be initiated:
- a) The handler is expected to remove the dog from the hospital immediately.
 - b) The witness must complete an incident report in SQIS. The name and address of the handler accompanying the dog must be included, as well as the patient's name if the owner is not the handler accompanying the dog.
 - c) When necessary, security will escort the person and dog off site.
 - d) The manager sends notification to the dog handler that their dog visiting privileges have been revoked. Copies are forwarded to the Risk Management department and Security.
- 13) In the event of a bite:
- a) The Manager or designate must:
 - I. Contact Public Health to notify them of the animal bite and complete the animal bite form (located on the intranet - forms) and
 - II. Notify the Director of Quality Improvement, Planning and Performance

Documentation and/or Communication

- 14) The dog information form and waiver with the vaccination record and certification from a veterinarian of good health will be kept on file in the pet visitation binder at the nursing station.
- 15) Dog visits will be recorded in the pet visitation log located in the pet visitation binder at reception

Related Documents

- Appendix 1: Dog's Information and Waiver Form
- Appendix 2: Dog Visitation Manual
- Patient Visitation Policy & Procedure During COVID-19

References:

1. Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC). Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings, 3rd edition. November 2012.

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3. SHEA. (2015) Infection Control Experts Outline Guidance for Animal Visitations in Hospitals. Retrieved from : <https://www.shea-online.org/index.php/journal-news/press-room/press-release-archives/235-infection-control-experts-outline-guidance-for-animal-visitations-in-hospitals>
4. Darlin, Kathleen. (2014). Animals visiting in healthcare Facilities. APIC Text. Retrieved July 13, 2016. <http://text.apic.org/toc/community-based-infection-prevention-practices/animals-visiting-in-healthcare-facilitie>
5. Transmission of MRSA between Companion Animals and Infected Human Patients Presenting to Outpatient Medical Care Facilities. Jorge Pinto Ferreira et al. 2011
6. Infection Control Guidelines for Therapy Dogs and Cats, Scheftel, J. March 10, 2010.
7. AJIC: American Journal of Infection Control: March 2008 (vol. 36 issue 2, pages 78-85)
8. Van Duijkeren E, Houwers DJ, Schoormans A, Broekhuizen-Stins MJ, Ikawaty R Transmission of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus intermedius between humans and animals. *Vet Microbiol* Apr 1;128(1-2): 213-5. 2008.
9. Leonard FC, Markey BK Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus in animals: A review. *Vet J* Jan;175(1): 27-36. 2008.
10. Boost MV, O'Donoghue MM, James A Prevalence of Staphylococcus aureus carriage among dogs and their owners. *Epidemiol Infect* Jul;136(7): 953-64.2008.
11. Lloyd DH Reservoirs of antimicrobial resistance in pet animals. *Clin Infect Dis* Sep 1;45: Suppl 2S148-52. 2007.
12. Stull, J. W., Bjorvik, E., Bub, J., Dvorak, G., Petersen, C., & Troyer, H. L. (2018). 2018 AAHA infection control, prevention, and biosecurity guidelines. *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association*, 54(6), 297-326.

Appendix 1

Dog Information Form and Waiver for Personal Dogs and Pet Therapy Dogs

Owner's Telephone #	
Name of handler if different than owner	
Dog's Name	
Breed	
Colour/ Markings	
Sex	
Spayed/ Neutered	
Is the dog on a raw food diet?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Veterinarian Name	
Telephone #	
Personal Dog Visitation only	
Who will the dog be visiting?	
Patient Room #	

I agree to abide by the rules as defined in the Dog Visitation Manual.

I agree to visit only the patient specified above (Personal Dog Visitation Only).

I agree to record all visits in the Pet Visitation Binder, located at the nursing station.

I agree to report any scratches, bites, unusual occurrences, etc. to Nursing Staff immediately.

I will not hold Headwaters Health Care Centre liable for any injury to or damage suffered by the dog. The handler of the dog shall be responsible and indemnify the hospital against all injury or damage to property or person, including all claims in respect thereof, caused by the dog while on hospital property.

Signature Date

Dog's Information & Waiver form, dog's vaccination certificate, and health records are kept by the Activationist in the Pet Visitation Binder

Appendix 2

Dog Visitation Manual

All handlers must be registered with the Activationist or designate and must be identified as such by wearing the dog visitation bandana provided or their Dog Therapy vest. Upon discharge of the personal dog's person, the bandana shall be returned to the Activationist.

A copy of the dog's current vaccination record must be provided to Activationist or designate.

Dogs on a raw food diet are not permitted.

The visiting ratio is one registered dog per handler. An individual is never to take more than one dog into Headwaters Health Care Centre at a time.

The hands of the handler must be cleaned as they enter and exit the patient rooms/spaces.

You must always be in control of your dog.

Where feasible the dog should be brought into the hospital in a carrying cage.

All dogs not in cages or let out of cages in the hospital must be on a standard leash, six feet in length or shorter, and a plain, flat collar or harness at all times. Choke chains, slip collars, pinch collars, Flexi extending leashes, chain leashes or Halti/Promise/Gentle Leader collars are NOT acceptable.

Pay close attention to your dog while visiting. Your dog may find medication or other foreign articles on the floor.

Please discourage your dog from taking treats while visiting.

Discourage your dog from kissing and licking patients.

If a patient asks for assistance with anything, please advise a staff member of their request. Do not attempt to lift or move a person at any time as this may result in injury to the patient or yourself.

Please groom your dog prior to visiting.

Please maintain confidentiality of those you visit. Do not discuss particulars of who you visit or their condition to others. If you have a concern, please share it with a staff member.

Conduct yourself in a professional and respectable manner.

Please be respectful of others' allergies, fears etc. Always ask permission prior to allowing your dog to visit others.

Approval Date	Approval Body	Approval Signature:
March 3 2015	Infection Prevention and Control Committee	Sandy Critchley Director, Quality Improvement, Planning and Performance [mm/yy]
May 2013	Professional Practice Committee	
June 2013	Medical Advisory Committee	