



TITLE: Pet Visitation

DEPARTMENT: Provision of Care, Treatment and Services

POLICY NO: 1000.100.025

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ISSUE DATE: 5/7/2012

NEXT REVIEW: 3/29/2017

**PURPOSE:**

To establish policy and guidelines for dog visitations in the hospital. Typically, a dog visitation would apply only to hospital admissions with an expected length of stay greater than three days.

**POLICY:**

Aspen Valley Hospital supports the individual, spiritual, and cultural needs of the patient by welcoming the presence of the family dog of inpatients, as appropriate. Outpatients, hospital staff, medical staff, and visitors are restricted from bringing their own pets (dog or otherwise) into the facility with them. This policy does not pertain to therapy dogs registered with Volunteer Services, or service animals as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (A service animal per the ADA is any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.) Pet visitation is not allowed in the Intensive Care Unit or in the Aspen Birth Center.

**PROCEDURE:**

Patients desiring visitation of their dog will request the visit with the nursing staff and will be provided with the facility requirements for such visitation. The team leader and/or house supervisor will be notified of all requests for a dog visit. Once approved by the nurse, the nurse will give the dog handler contact information for Security for further instructions/information.

Guidelines for inpatient dog visitations are as follows:

- a. Patient-owned dogs may be permitted for inpatient visits when the patient’s condition is such that it will not be compromised by the visit.
- b. Dog visitation is generally not allowed for patients who are immune-compromised or in isolation. (Exception: a physician may determine that the benefit from a pet visit outweighs any risk.)
- c. Dogs must be at least 12 months of age – no puppies are allowed in patient care areas.
- d. Owners/handlers must show proof of rabies immunization, and confirm that the dog is free of infection or contagious disease. (See attached Guidelines for Potential Infectious Disease.)
- e. Dog handlers must ensure the dogs are visibly clean, dry and well groomed. The dog must wear a collar and be on a non-retractable leash or in a cage when traveling through the public corridors. Dogs will be under the supervision of their adult handler at all times. The handler will maintain constant, complete control while in the facility.
- f. The adult handler is responsible for dog toileting. In the event of a urinary or fecal accident, the visit will be terminated. The housekeeping department will be notified.

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- g. Dogs must exhibit a friendly, social temperament towards humans and other dogs. They must be calm, quiet, predictable and controllable.
- h. Dog visits are limited to one per day, no more than 60 minutes per visit, one dog per visit.
- i. Patients and staff who come in contact with the dog will wash their hands with soap and water or use antiseptics before and after dog contact.
- j. Dog handlers are responsible for ensuring that the dog does not come in contact with the patient's non-intact skin.
- k. Dogs are prohibited from the following areas:
  - Food preparation, storage and serving areas
  - Sterile/clean areas including supply rooms
  - Employees' toilet/shower/dressing rooms
  - Cafeteria
  - Nursing stations
  - Waiting areas
  - Other patient rooms or staff.
  - Diagnostic and treatment areas (surgery, lab, radiology)
  - Prior to entering an elevator, check with other occupants for permission to enter with the pet.

After verification of the vaccination and the Pet Visitation Agreement is signed, Security will escort dog and handler to patient room. Once visit has ended, Security will be notified to escort dog and handler out of the facility. If Security is unavailable, a member of the unit may escort.

The hospital reserves the right to deny a dog visit due to changes in the patient's condition or unacceptability of the dog. Any exception can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by Infection Control Department at the request of the clinical staff.

In case of an incident (animal bite, scratch, etc.) the healthcare and security staff are to be notified and an Occurrence Report will be completed and sent to Risk Management. The animal will be secured and no further visits allowed. Assistance will be obtained for the injured person/visitors who will be directed to the Emergency Department.



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**Attachments:** [Pet Visitation Guidelines - Infectious Diseases](#), [Pet Visitation Agreement](#)

**Approved By:**

Nursing General Policies: 4/13, 3/16

**Reviewed Dates:** 4/13, 3/16