

FAQ Visiting Policy

Large Animal & Equine



VETERINARY
MEDICAL CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Can I visit my animal during hospitalization?

We know how worried families become when an animal is hospitalized, and how important it is for those animals to have contact with the people they know. We encourage clients to visit their animal regularly.

It is important to note that not all animals are comforted by human contact when they are ill and it sometimes can be detrimental to their care. Your treatment team may limit the frequency and duration of family visits if the patient develops signs of distress during visitation (such as an increased heart rate, increased respiration, or other signs of agitation). The visit may also be terminated or denied at any time to ensure patient or human safety and timely treatment of other patients.

How do I arrange a visit with my animal?

The Equine Hospital is open for patient visits Monday through Friday, between 10:00 am and 8:00 pm, and 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Saturday and Sunday. The Large Animal Hospital is also open for patient visits during these times, but MUST be by prior appointment.

Patients' immediate family members, or designated representatives, are welcome to visit during these time periods for up to 60 minutes per day. Visiting times outside of these hours and on holidays are by appointment only and may be denied depending upon staff availability and patient needs.

What if my animal is in isolation?

Clients with animals staying in the Large Animal Hospital isolation facility may visit their animals by appointment only during the times listed above. Visits conducted in the isolation facility are limited to 20 minutes, once per day, and must be supervised to ensure biosecurity measures are maintained. Please be advised that clients visiting this clinical area will be required to adhere to strict infection control protocols. Children under the age of twelve cannot visit patients in isolation.

If you wish to speak directly with your veterinarian during your visit, please speak with him/her ahead of time to schedule a consultation. Veterinarians are not always available to answer treatment and prognostic questions at the time of your visit. If you are unable to visit your animal during the stated visiting hours, please speak to your veterinarian. After-hour visits must be authorized by your veterinarian; non-authorized visits will be denied.

Where does visitation take place?

Clients can visit their animal in its stall. Please do not remove your animal from his/her stall without staff approval and supervision. We also ask that you respect patient and client privacy, and our biosecurity processes by not visiting with animals that do not belong to you.

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Why do you limit visitation?

Unlike human hospitals, where patients are often housed in semi-private rooms, our patients are cared for in wards where multiple patients receive round-the-clock monitoring by numerous staff. Patients are checked hourly, treatments are administered throughout the day, and diagnostics are performed as your animal's condition changes. By limiting family visitation to certain hours each day, we maximize our staff's ability to deliver the highest quality patient care with minimal disruption while maintaining a quiet and restful environment for each patient.

The staff and faculty of the VMC recognize that you bring your animal here for highly specialized care, and we will do everything we can to support your animal's health and healing. Please let us know how we can make your animal feel comfortable and loved in between visits.

How does the VMC uphold safety standards during visitation?

It is important that all patients and guests feel safe and secure during their visit to the hospital. Please help us to maintain confidentiality by not asking staff or clients for information about other patients' conditions. A visit may be terminated or denied at any time to ensure patient or human safety and timely treatment of other patients.

In order to provide an optimal healing environment, it is also important that every guest uphold the VMC infection control practices. Please wash your hands before and after each visit. Sinks for handwashing are located throughout the hospital and disinfectant hand gel stations are located in the front lobby, as well as along each aisle of our facilities. Please do not bring food items for patient consumption without the approval of your veterinarian, and do not touch or feed patients other than your own during your visit.

Immune-compromised individuals, including young children, should not visit in Isolation or Partial Isolation.

What if my animal's condition deteriorates after visiting hours?

You can call the hospital between 8:00 am and 10:00 pm for an update on your animal's condition, and your treatment team will contact you immediately if your animal experiences a significant status change or crisis. Families facing end-of-life crises, including imminent euthanasia, will be called to the hospital for visitation, decision-making, and goodbyes. We will do everything we can to make sure you have the time you need with your animal.