

FAQ Large Animal Hospital & Equine Center Visiting Policies



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

VETERINARY MEDICAL CENTER

Can I visit my animal during hospitalization?

Our staff recognizes how worried families become when an animal is hospitalized, and how important it is for those animals to have contact with their loved ones. We encourage clients to visit their animal regularly, which is often a comfort to both the patient and the person.

It is important to note that *not all animals* are comforted by human contact when they are seriously ill. The 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). Visitation may also be terminated or denied at any time to ensure the safety and timely treatment of options.

How do I arrange a visit with my animal?

The Large Animal Hospital and Equine Center holds open visitation daily between 10:00 am and 8:00 pm, including University holidays. Patients' immediate family members, or designated representatives, are welcome to visit during these time periods for up to 60 minutes per day. All children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent.

Clients with animals staying in the Large Animal Hospital isolation unit may visit their animals *by appointment only* during the times listed above. Visits conducted in Isolation are limited to 20 minutes, once per day, and must be supervised. Children under the age of 12 should not visit patients in isolation.

If you wish to speak directly with your veterinarian during visitation, 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 visitation.

If you are unable to visit your animal during the stated visiting hours, please speak to your veterinarian. After-hours visitation must be authorized by your veterinarian; non-authorized visits will be denied.

Why does the VMC limit visitation?

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.

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. Please let us know how we can make your animal feel comfortable and loved in between visits.

Where does visitation take place?

Clients are certainly encouraged to visit their animal's 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 during visitation, as many families may be visiting at the same time.

Patients in Isolation are allowed time-limited visitation in stalls. Please be advised that clients visiting this clinical area will be required to adhere to strict infection control protocols. The treatment team may ask that visitors leave if a patient crisis occurs or if visitation compromises patient safety.

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.

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 visitation. 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 recognize that these moments are meaningful to clients, and we will do everything we can to make sure you have the time you need with your animal.