

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MCHC: Visitor Restrictions, COVID-19 and Preventing Illnesses

Madelia, Minn. – Influenza and coronavirus (COVID-19) are in the forefront of the news and on everyone’s mind. The caregivers at the Madelia Community Hospital & Clinic (MCHC) have procedures in place and are prepared to care for patients suffering from all respiratory illnesses, including the flu and COVID-19.

Influenza and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses caused by viruses that can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The signs and symptoms of the seasonal flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Your best source of information on the spread of the flu and COVID-19 are the websites of the [Center for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and/or the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) (MDH).

Visitor Restrictions Implemented:

With the increasing number of influenza cases and the threat of COVID-19, MCHC has started visitor restrictions in our hospital effective immediately. Visitation will be restricted as follows:

- Only immediate family members permitted (patient spouse or significant other, parent, sibling or child)
- No children under the age of 12
- Only two visitors per patient at a time
- No one who is ill will be permitted to visit.

These restrictions apply to all patients in all areas of the hospital, including staff members. There are certain circumstances in which we will make a “compassionate exception” to these restrictions. These will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Increased Patient Volume Expected

MCHC is asking the public’s assistance in dealing with increased patient volume and wait times in the Clinic, Emergency Department, and Urgent Care because of the current situation.

- Do not bring along additional family members to appointments. If possible, just the patient and a caregiver should be present.
- There is no specific treatment or vaccine for COVID-19 at this time. Patients do not need to be examined by a health care provider if symptoms are mild. We encourage all patients with mild symptoms to stay at home, to decrease the possibility of transmitting the virus to others in the hospital and clinic, including your health care providers. The main reason to be examined in person is if you are having significant trouble breathing, to determine whether you need to be hospitalized.
- We strongly urge patients to call their health care provider **before** coming in for treatment. Calling ahead gives health care officials time to prepare and will help ensure patients get the appropriate treatment as quickly as possible.
- Drink fluids to stay hydrated. Manage fever by taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen. If the fever is uncontrollable with over the counter medications, contact your medical provider. Also contact your medical provider if you are having trouble breathing.

Testing for COVID-19

(Note: These recommendations could change over time based on guidance from the CDC and MDH.)

Testing is needed only for persons who have the typical symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath) and

- (1) Exposure to a person known or strongly suspected by their health care provider to be infected;
- (2) Exposure to a cluster of persons with severe lower respiratory symptoms of unknown cause; or
- (3) Recent travel to an area known to have a large number of confirmed cases.

Nasal swab specimens will be collected by MCHC personnel and sent to MDH. Results should be available within 24 hours depending on the testing volume received at MDH.

Steps to Prevent the Flu and COVID-19

Officials remind the public, in addition to getting the seasonal flu vaccine, there are other steps everyone can take to prevent contracting and spreading respiratory illnesses including the flu and COVID-19.

Take steps to protect yourself

- Clean your hands often. Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Take steps to protect others

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. If your children are ill, keep them at home. Avoid all crowds.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissue in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol.
- If you are sick, wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are unable to wear a facemask, then the people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. If you are NOT sick, you do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is ill.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, phones, keyboards, remote controls, toilets, faucets and sinks.

“Although COVID-19 is not an influenza-type virus and vaccination will not prevent it, we still urge everyone to get the flu vaccine now if you have not done so already this season,” said Dr. Marc Wilkinson, family medicine physician at MCHC. Vaccination is especially important for children, adults 65 and older, pregnant women and people with asthma, diabetes and other long-term conditions who are at high risk from flu complications. Supplies of the flu vaccine are readily available. Anyone interested in a flu shot can stop by or call MCHC at 507-642-3255.

The safety and security of our patients, visitors and staff is our highest priority. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

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About Madelia Community Hospital & Clinic

Madelia Community Hospital & Clinic is an independent, nonprofit facility staffed by a team of medical professionals that are committed to providing health care of the highest standards to patients in the Madelia area. As a 25-bed acute care hospital, we offer all of the primary health services: Laboratory, Radiology, Physical Therapy, Home Care, Emergency Room/Urgent Care, and Surgical Care. Our attached family medical clinic also provides care for patients in all the seasons of their life. Over the years, we have proactively responded to the changing demands within the health care industry, which has ensured our ability to deliver up-to-date medical services, purchase advanced medical equipment, and provide complete and compassionate care to all who enter our facility.