



Animal visits at the Women's

This fact sheet explains how assistance animals and personal pets may visit patients at the Women's. It also explains the steps we take to create a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

Why we support animal visits

Animals can provide comfort, companionship and emotional support during a hospital stay. The Women's supports assistance animals and, in some situations, personal pet visits.

Before you bring an animal to the Women's

Please speak with your treating team as early as possible.

This helps us:

- assess safety requirements
- find a suitable place for the visit
- consider the needs of other patients
- plan for your animal's care if you become unable to look after them.

Keeping animals safe and under control

To help everyone stay safe and comfortable, always have your animal with you and under control.

Make sure you:

- keep your animal on a short lead, in a harness, or in a crate or carrier
- stay with your animal at all times
- keep your animal with you and don't let it move around the hospital on its own.

Caring for your animal

The person who brings the animal to the hospital is responsible for its care, welfare and supervision.

Animal visits should be comfortable and enjoyable for both you and your animal.

Please make sure your animal has:

- water
- opportunities to go to the toilet
- time to rest.

Hospital staff cannot:

- feed animals
- walk animals
- take animals to the toilet
- groom animals
- supervise animals.

If your situation changes unexpectedly

Please identify a family member, friend, handler or support person who can care for your animal if you:

- become unwell
- need emergency treatment
- go to a restricted area
- have surgery
- stay in hospital longer than expected.

Restricted areas

We know seeing your animal while you're in hospital can bring comfort and support.

However, animals cannot enter some areas of the hospital because of infection prevention and control and other safety requirements.

Animals cannot enter the following areas:

- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- Special Care Nursery
- Birth Centre
- postnatal wards
- operating theatres
- recovery areas
- Day Surgery
- treatment rooms
- isolation rooms
- kitchens
- pharmacy areas
- MRI rooms
- sterile processing areas.

Hygiene and safety

We want everyone to enjoy a safe, healthy and positive visit. You can help by following these simple hygiene tips:

- Wash or sanitise your hands before and after touching an animal.
- Make sure your animal is clean, healthy and well-groomed before bringing them in.
- Only bring animals that are comfortable and calm around people.
- Clean up any animal waste straight away.

Please respect other patients

Not everyone is comfortable around animals.

Some people may:

- have allergies
- be afraid of animals
- have had negative experiences with animals
- have cultural or religious reasons for avoiding contact with animals.

We may need to change the location or timing of a visit to meet the needs of all patients.

Questions?

If you have any questions about assistance animals or pet visits, please speak with your nurse, midwife, doctor or treating team.

Do you need an interpreter?



Interpreter

You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au