Visiting Hours

Part of being a nurse, involves dealing with the people who are close to your patients. When a patient is staying in a hospital or other health facility, it is often necessary to welcome, monitor and inform visitors on a daily basis. In many cases you may form stronger relationships with the patients’ visitors than the patients themselves. Depending on the condition of the patient, certain loved ones will be allowed to visit, while others will not. It is a difficult time for people who have loved ones in the hospital. Showing them compassion and explaining the rules is much easier if you have the necessary English skills.

Study the different people that may come to visit the patient. Then read some typical concerns and questions that visitors may have, and some appropriate responses that you may be able to give them.

Typical Visitors

Immediate family
Mother and Father (patient's parents)
Husband or Wife (the man or woman the patient is married to)
Son and Daughter (children of the patient, boy and girl)
Brother and Sister/siblings (other children of the patient's parents)

Extended family
Grandmother and Grandfather (mother and father of patient's parents)
Aunt and Uncle (brother and sister of patient's parents)
Niece and Nephew (girl and boy child of patient's siblings)
Cousins (children of patient's aunt or uncle)

Friends and other loved ones
Best friend (patient's closest friend)
Room-mate (a person the patient lives with)
Neighbour (a friend who lives near the patient)
Co-worker (a person who works with the patient)
Boyfriend or Girlfriend (the man or woman the patient loves/dates)
Fiancé or Fiancée (the man or woman the patient is engaged to marry)

Questions and Concerns of Loved Ones

- We're Michael's grandparents.
- Could you tell me which room Mrs Smythe is in?
- Is my child going to be okay?
- When can we speak with the doctor?
- What time are visiting hours?
- I'm trying to locate my sister. *(I'm trying to find my sister's room.)*
- Is there anything you can do to make him more comfortable.
- My child would like something to drink.
- Is there somewhere I can lie down for a while.
- Could you tell me where the chapel is?
- Please tell her to get well soon.
Questions and Responses from Nurses

- What is your relation to Jessica?
- You'll have to come back during visiting hours.
- Ms Lee is too tired for visitors.
- Room 7 is down the hall to your right.
- I'll give you two some privacy now.
- Does your daughter need anything?
- I'm afraid she's not having a very good day today.
- We do the best we can around here.
- There's a quiet room for families down the hall.
- The doctor would like to have a word with you. (The doctor wants to speak to you.)
- She's doing much better this morning.
- He's in isolation because of the transplant.
- We had to transfer your mother-in-law to the ICU.
- It's in your brother's best interest.

Conversation:

Nurse: I'm afraid visiting hours are over, sir
Visitor: My wife's in room 3B.
Nurse: Sorry, you'll have to come back in the morning.
Visitor: And leave her all alone overnight?
Nurse: I'm afraid that's the policy, sir.
Visitor: Surely you can make an exception? What if she needs me in the night?
Nurse: Don't worry, we'll look after her. What she really needs is her rest.
Visitor: Some of her friends want to see her too. When can they come?
Nurse: Visiting hours are from 9 to 11 in the morning and 4 to 7 in the evening, but I'm afraid while your wife is on bedrest the doctor has requested that only immediate family members come in to see her.
Visitor: Can't her friends even stop by to bring her flowers?
Nurse: Flowers are not permitted in this ward. We just can't risk any germs that might come in with them.
Visitor: Well, I guess it's all in her best interest.
Nurse: Thanks for understanding. Now, I'm going to bring your wife her dinner. Why don't you head home and get something to eat yourself?
Visitor: Okay. I really hate to leave her, but that's probably a good idea.
Nurse: She's in good hands here. I'll tell her you were here and that you'll see her in the morning.