



St. Joseph's Medical Center

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**Area Hospitals Collaborate to Implement
New Flu Season Visitor Guidelines**

Effective Monday, November 9, 2009, Stockton, Lodi, and Manteca area hospitals are jointly implementing new visitation policies aimed at limiting exposure and possible spread of flu to patients, visitors, and staff during this unusual flu season.

In a joint meeting of hospital administrators last week, Dameron Hospital, San Joaquin General Hospital and St. Joseph's Medical Center in Stockton, Lodi Memorial Hospital in Lodi, and Doctors Hospital of Manteca, decided to adopt the federal Centers for Disease Control recommendations for reducing exposure to flu virus by limiting the number of people in the hospital setting.

Under the new visitor guidelines, the hospitals reiterate that friends and family members not visit if they have flu-like symptoms such as a cough, fever, runny nose, and sore throat. In addition, only two visitors per patient will be allowed at a time and children under the age of 16 will not be permitted. Pregnant women are at special risk and are also advised not to visit.

"All of the hospitals realize the importance of loved ones as part of the healing process," said Michael Ricks, Chief Operating Officer, St. Joseph's Medical Center. "However, we also have an obligation to be good health care stewards to the community. We feel these visitation precautions are necessary during this flu pandemic to help ensure a safe and healing environment for patients, staff, and the visitors themselves."

Hospital officials urge people of all ages with influenza-like illness to stay home and call or see their primary care physician. Symptoms may include fever of 100 degrees F or greater, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, runny nose, vomiting and diarrhea.

"This is a key effort hospitals can make to protect both our patients and the community." Says Mark Sey, VP/Chief Administrative Officer, Lodi Memorial Hospital. "We ask that individuals in our community join our effort by seeking to vaccinate against H1N1." For the latest information on the flu, visit www.flu.gov.

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