

Changes to how patient's food and belongings are brought into Western Health

Updated 7th September 2021



Western Health

COVID - 19

Be Safe – Be Smart – Be Kind

Special rules currently apply for people bringing patients personal belongings and prepared food into Western Health. The health of our community, patients, support persons, carers, visitors, volunteers and staff is our biggest priority during the outbreak of COVID-19. We have implemented a number of measures to keep our community safe while supporting the provision of the highest level of care.

Western Health is closely monitoring developments regarding COVID-19. Advice from the Department of Health (DH) is being continuously updated and this document will be altered accordingly.

Who should read this?

This QRG is for Western Health staff. Please note that there is a corresponding factsheet for families and carers titled '**How to deliver food and belongings to patients at Western Health**', which can be found under the heading 'Patient/ Consumer Information Handouts' in the Western Health Resources section of the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#).

What is this QRG about?

This QRG outlines Western Health's rules around bringing personal belongings and prepared food into Western Health and where exceptions to these rules may apply.

What are the rules for bringing food items for patients into Western Health?

Pre-packaged food such as chocolates, biscuits and bottled drinks that can be wiped down with a Clinell wipe can be brought into Western Health for patients.

All other food is NOT permitted to be brought into Western Health, except in extenuating circumstances.

Extenuating circumstances will be identified locally and escalated to the Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) and/or Operational Lead for decision. Such extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to; family members attending the ward daily to feed patients who are weaning off their Nasogastric Tube (NGT) and/or are at risk of malnutrition.

In extenuating circumstances, how should food be delivered to Western Health patients?

Food CAN ONLY be delivered directly to wards and patient's bedsides by family / carers who have been provided with a visitor exemption. Western Health takes no responsibility for food brought into the hospital, as per standard practice.

Food CANNOT be dropped off at security check points or wards and provided to Western Health staff to give to patients.

What should be considered when planning to bring prepared food in to Western Health?

- Prepared food should be freshly prepared within 24 hours of bringing it to the ward
- Prepared food should be stored and carried in clean, sealed containers
- Prepared food cannot be reheated or refrigerated on the ward. Therefore prepared food should be brought to the ward HOT and must be eaten immediately
- A 'thermos' flask is recommended to transport HOT foods. Make sure that it has been preheated with boiling water before being filled with the steaming hot food. If this is not possible, uninsulated hot food should not be transported long distances (greater than 30 minutes), as it will increase the risk of food poisoning
- Visitors and patients are **NOT PERMITTED** to use any kitchens/ kitchen appliances (e.g. microwave, fridge) located on wards. Patients may use therapy kitchen spaces as part of therapy and under supervision of Allied Health clinicians
- Ordering of food for delivery to patients at the hospital is discouraged. In the event this does occur, delivery drivers will not be permitted to enter the hospital and must be met at the entrance by the patient.

What are the rules for bringing patients' personal belongings into Western Health?

Western Health acknowledges that it is important for patients to have the option of having their own personal clothing and items whilst they are in hospital. However, in line with the directive from the DH, visitors **should limit** the number of personal items that they bring into the hospital to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

Ward staff should therefore reinforce to patients/families/carers that **only necessary items** should be brought into Western Health and this should be kept to a minimum.

Patient personal items that CAN be brought into Western Health:

- Toiletries
- Clothing
- Foot wear
- Wallet or purse
- Technology (phones, laptops, tablets, chargers)
- Hearing aids, glasses
- Dentures
- Comfort items required to maintain patient wellbeing, deliver patient care or achieve goals (toy, reading and writing materials)
- Specific equipment items required to deliver patient care or achieve goals i.e. a specialised piece of equipment
- Photos
- Flowers

Patient personal items that CANNOT be brought into hospital

- Patients are discouraged from bringing in valuable belongings
- Bedding

Patient's personal belongings must be cleaned prior to being brought into Western Health

- To prevent the spread of COVID-19 into Western Health, visitors **MUST** clean items before bring them into hospital. Clothes should be washed separately from other laundry, in hot water (60–90 degrees Celsius) and laundry detergent. If machine washing is not possible, clothing should be soaked in hot water and detergent in a large bucket or trough
- Clothes should be dried separately from other laundry either in a clothes dryer or hung out to

dry in full sunlight

- Shoes and other belongings should be wiped down fully with a disinfectant wash
- All belongings should be placed in **ONE** clean plastic bag to be brought into Western Health. Western Health will not accept more than **ONE** bag of personal belongings. This bag should weigh no more than 10kg.

Delivery of food and personal belongings to patients at Western Health

If arriving within visitation hours

Visitors intending to bring food or personal belongings to a patient during visiting hours need to abide by the current visitation guidelines, as outlined in the Western Health Visitation QRG on the [COVID-19 microsite](#). Visitors with an exemption who are eligible for entry to Western Health should bring food or personal belongings directly to the patient's room following completion of the following steps:

- 1) Report to security checkpoint
- 2) Successfully complete visitor screening process
- 3) Complete hand hygiene, remove belongings from their plastic bag and placed them in a clean blue hospital plastic bag provided by checkpoint security officer
- 4) Report to Ward Clerk or nurse on the ward, who will arrange for items within the bag to be wiped down with Clinell wipes. These are items such as toiletry bags, boxes of biscuits, shoes, books and equipment. This can be done by a nurse or the ward PSA and is designed to minimise the potential transmission of COVID 19 onto wards. Equipment / items used within therapy to help patients achieve their goals can be wiped down by Allied Health Assistants. Western Health takes no responsibility for any damage that may occur when wiping down patient belongings
- 5) At the end of their visit, families/carers are encouraged to remove soiled clothes from the patient's room which will be available in a blue hospital plastic bag at the patient's bed side.

Non-visitor Drop off/Pick up Process

Non visitors, who are only dropping off or picking-up patients personal belongings, must complete the following steps:

- 1) Report to security checkpoint and inform security officer that they wish to drop-off or pick-up patient's belongings. It is important for non-visitors to know the ward and bed number of the patient prior to attending the hospital to drop off the belongings.
Please note: Due to unexpected demands family / carers may sometimes be asked to wait outside for a short period of time for a security officer to be available.
- 2) Successfully complete screening process (mask, temperature check, screen questions only).
- 3) When asked by a security officer, family / carers must complete hand hygiene, don mask and remove belongings from their plastic bag and place them in a clean blue hospital plastic bag.
- 4) Prior to security taking receipt of the belongings and portering to the ward, family/carers must complete and sign a log sheet to record the drop off or pick-up of any patient's belongings. The log sheet will also be signed by the security officer.
- 5) Family / carers must wait outside whilst the security officer dons gloves and proceeds to ward to drop off and pick-up soiled belongings from the patient's room.
- 6) Family / carers dropping off belongings ONLY should leave Western Health grounds once belongings have been handed over to the Security officer.
- 7) The Security officer should report to the Ward Clerk or nursing staff and provide them with the patient's belongings. Ward staff will be asked to
 - sign the log sheet recording receipt of belongings
 - collect soiled clothing located at the patient's bedside in a blue hospital plastic bag

- and provide to Security officer
- arrange for items within the dropped off bag to be wiped down with Clinell wipes. These are items such as toiletry bags, boxes of biscuits, shoes, books and equipment. This can be done by a nurse or the ward PSA and is designed to minimise the potential transmission of COVID 19 onto wards. Equipment / items used within therapy to help patients achieve their goals can be wiped down by Allied Health Assistance. Western Health takes no responsibility for any damage that may occur when wiping down patient belongings.

Please note:

- Only one checkpoint Security officer will be portering belongings at each site from the main entry check point, ensuring that another security officer is available at check point.
- Checkpoint Security officers must don gloves during every portering of patient belongings and discard once delivered
- Checkpoint Security officer will only porter one patient's belongings at a time to avoid mix- up of bags.
- Checkpoint Security officers have the right to refuse to porter patient's belongings if they are clearly soiled or are not on the list of permitted items. Under no circumstances are any belongings to be left at any security checkpoint:
 - Clean belongings will be collected from the family / carer when the Security officer is available to porter straight up to the ward.
 - Soiled belongings need to remain on the ward and be stored in a blue hospital plastic bag until family/ carer present to the main entry security checkpoint to collect. As soon as available the Security officer will then attend the ward and pick up soiled belongings; returning back to the checkpoint where the patient's family / carer will collect the soiled belongings.

Security Officer Contact

Ward staff can contact the security supervisor on 0466 004 608 or via email WH-Securitysupervisors@mh.org.au to advise the main entry checkpoint that family / carer are attending to collect soiled belongings or drop off clean belongings.