

**Mount Auburn Hospital – Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Policy for Support Persons on Labor and Delivery and Postpartum**

Updated November 2023

Background: This policy applies to support persons for all patients on Labor and Delivery, Antepartum, Triage and the Postpartum units. This policy is designed to balance the critical requirement to keep our patients and staff healthy with the essential human need for, and proven scientific benefit of, a patient-chosen support person(s) during the labor, birth and postpartum process.

Definitions:

VISITORS are individuals who visit inpatients.

LABOR SUPPORT PERSON(S) are those individuals who continuously stay in the Labor & Delivery room to provide emotional and physical support to the birthing person.

ANTEPARTUM or POSTPARTUM SUPPORT PERSON: one designated individual to stay in the patient's antepartum or postpartum room during their hospitalization.

Designated support persons are not considered visitors.

Protocol:

1. Counseling regarding this policy should begin during the prenatal (outpatient) care process. Reiteration at multiple visits is recommended.

2. When a patient is advised to come to Labor and Delivery (prior to arrival) the patient should be reminded that we welcome continuous support person(s) who will accompany them throughout their childbirth experience.

3. **LABOR SUPPORT PERSONS** are those individuals who continuously stay in the Labor & Delivery room to provide emotional and physical support to the birthing person.

Support persons may leave the unit to attend to necessary matters, they are encouraged to be continuous support people throughout the entire labor and birth experience with limited comings and goings.

Typically birthing persons invite 1-3 individuals to be labor support people. We recognize that some birthing persons may desire additional people for their birthing experience. Additional support people may be able to be accommodated. Due to space limitations in our birthing rooms coupled with the need to provide high-quality, safe care to our patients, additional support persons may be limited.

Depending on the clinical situation, Labor & Delivery staff may request any support person to leave the birthing room. This would only be done if staff feel the support people in the room are limiting the provision of safe and appropriate clinical care.

- Support person(s) should be 12 years of age or older. If a labor support is younger than 18 years of age, there must be a separate support person present who is 18 years of age or older who can be responsible for an under 12 year old individual

- Support people will receive a designated hospital band indicating their role for staff identification purposes.

4. ANTEPARTUM or POSTPARTUM SUPPORT PERSON:

- Following delivery, a single support person will be allowed to stay with the patient during their postpartum stay. This support person will receive the 2nd baby band to identify them.

- For patients who are admitted in the antepartum period or readmitted postpartum to the obstetric service for any complications, a single, healthy asymptomatic support person is allowed to stay for the duration of the patient's hospitalization. The patient's newborn may accompany the patient, with the healthy asymptomatic support person performing care for the infant.

5. When a patient arrives to the hospital, they should identify their healthy, continuous support person(s).

6. The patient and support(s) will be screened on arrival to hospital for symptoms of influenza-like illness (ILI) and COVID-19.

7. Any support person who screens positive for symptoms of ILI or COVID-19; tests positive for ILI or COVID-19; or develops symptoms of ILI or COVID-19 during the course of the patient's hospitalization will be asked to isolate at home immediately and follow the CDC guidelines for COVID-19. In these circumstances, alternative support may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8. For known COVID-19 positive patients, a single healthy asymptomatic support person is allowed to stay for the duration of the patient's hospitalization.