

## **Sturgis Hospital Implements Restricted Visitor Guidelines:**

In an effort to reduce the transmission of influenza from person to person, Sturgis Hospital has implemented limited visitation in all hospital areas and are following these guidelines:

- Hospital visitors are limited to persons 18 years old or older.
- Visitors to OB areas are limited to immediate family. Siblings that are under 18 years old will be able to visit the newborn and may be screened for fever.
- Visitors to the Emergency Department are limited to one visitor per patient.

If you are sick with any flu symptoms, we are asking that you do not enter the hospital to visit patients. Patients that are coming in with flu symptoms are asked to apply a mask over their nose and mouth while they are here. In addition, all visitors and patients are being reminded to wash their hands frequently and cover their mouth when they cough and sneeze.

These new restrictions are similar to what other hospitals in our area and throughout the United States are implementing at this time. They will be [in effect throughout the seasonal flu time, which is likely to go until April 2015.](#) We are trying to be sensitive to those who want to visit family and loved ones in the hospital, but we also have a duty to protect our patients and staff members. If you come in to visit someone and appear to be sick, you may be asked to leave the hospital to comply with these guidelines. Most patient rooms have telephones in them and a call to check on the ill person is much better than visiting and exposing them to something worse than what they already have or being exposed while visiting and taking it home and into the community.

Sturgis Hospital reported over 100 cases of flu-like illnesses last week. The Emergency Department, Sturgis Medical Group, Sturgis Pediatrics and AM&PMCare have been inundated with phone calls and office visits related to the flu. It is obvious that influenza (flu) is in the community and we are encouraging people to continue their efforts in preventing the spread of the flu including:

- Stay home if you are sick until you are fever-free for 24 hours
- Keep your children home from school if they are sick
- Cover your cough and sneeze
- Wash your hands frequently
- Become vaccinated when you are offered the vaccine

Thank you for your understanding during this influenza season.