Stay safe this sick season: Ways you can help prevent the spread of illness

Atrium Health Floyd implementing visitor restrictions to help protect patients

ROME, Ga., Dec. 9, 2025 – As respiratory illnesses rise, Atrium Health Floyd is urging everyone to take steps to protect themselves and those around them. Simple actions like practicing good hygiene, staying up to date on vaccinations, and staying home when sick, can help keep individuals, families and communities safer this sick season.

Health experts strongly recommend the best ways to help keep more people healthy and limit the spread of illness include:

- **Stay home when sick:** Protect others by staying home if you have symptoms of respiratory illness, such as a cough, fever or fatigue.
- **Get vaccinated:** Vaccines remain the most effective tool for preventing severe illness. Make sure you are up to date on vaccinations appropriate for your situation, including this year's updated flu and COVID-19 shots, and the RSV vaccine, if appropriate. Talk to your doctor if you have questions or need guidance about the best options for you.
- **Practice good respiratory etiquette:** Wash hands frequently, cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, and avoid close contact with others when feeling sick.

For those needing non-emergency care, Atrium Health Floyd offers several options, including:

- **Virtual Primary Care:** Choose a provider and care team for most of your ongoing primary care needs, from the comfort of your home. Convenient, virtual on-demand care options are available with 24/7 video e-visits for adults and children, not just during sick season but all year round.
- **Primary Care:** Contact your primary care provider if you have flu-like symptoms.
- **Urgent Care:** If experiencing mild to moderate symptoms, consider either a virtual or in-person urgent care option for mild to moderate symptoms to avoid long wait times in emergency departments.

Members of the community can easily find care options by visiting atriumhealthfloydharbin.org.

"When we each take these steps — like staying home when sick, getting vaccinated and practicing good respiratory etiquette — we help protect not only ourselves but also our families, neighbors, and the most vulnerable members of our community," says Dr. Katie Passaretti, VP, chief infection prevention officer for Advocate Health, of which Atrium Health Floyd is a part. "Together, these simple actions make a meaningful difference in reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses this season."

In addition to recommending ways to prevent illness and get needed care, Atrium Health Floyd is implementing temporary visitor restrictions in acute care hospitals, emergency departments, rehabilitation units and facilities, behavioral health, inpatient hospice, infusion centers and certain cancer areas including bone marrow transplant clinics, effective Wednesday, Dec. 10. These restrictions are in response to a sustained increase in respiratory viruses in the community and designed to protect vulnerable patients. The restrictions include:
- **Visitor age limit:** Children 12 and under and anyone with respiratory symptoms should not visit the locations listed above, except healthy siblings visiting newborns in Mother and Baby or Labor & Delivery units. Healthy children under 12 must stay with a caregiver and cannot visit other patient care areas.
  - Other exceptions to visitor restrictions may be made in special cases if the child is symptom-free and receives approval from the clinical team.
  - Visitors with respiratory symptoms should not visit.

- **Masking policy:** We ask that visitors at these locations wear masks in areas where direct patient care is provided and in waiting areas.

"To help keep adult, newborn and pediatric patients and our health care workers healthy, we ask that anyone who is feeling sick stay home and do not visit," Passaretti says. "This helps protect all our patients during a time when more people tend to get sick."

Atrium Health Floyd thanks community members and visitors for their cooperation and for helping make health care environments safer for all.

It is important to note that some hospitals and care locations may have additional restrictions on visitors in certain areas and restrictions are subject to change without notice. Please read and follow signage posted on-site and follow any directions provided by staff members at the health care site.

About Atrium Health Floyd
The Atrium Health Floyd family of health care services is a leading medical provider and economic force in northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd is part of Charlotte, North Carolina-based Advocate Health, the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Floyd strategically combined with Harbin Clinic in 2024 and employs more than 5,200 teammates who provide care in over 40 medical specialties at four facilities: Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center – a 361-bed full-service, acute care hospital and regional referral center in Rome, Georgia; Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center in Cedartown, Georgia; and Atrium Health Floyd Cherokee Medical Center in Centre, Alabama; and Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center Behavioral Health, also in Rome. Together, Atrium Health Floyd and Harbin Clinic provide primary care, specialty care and urgent care throughout northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd also operates a stand-alone emergency department in Chattooga County, the first such facility to be built from the ground-up in Georgia.

About Advocate Health
Advocate Health is the third-largest nonprofit, integrated health system in the United States, created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health

and Atrium Health. Providing care under the names Advocate Health Care in Illinois; Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama; and Aurora Health Care in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health services nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies, with Wake Forest University School of Medicine serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Advocate Health is nationally recognized for its expertise in heart and vascular, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs more than 160,000 teammates across 69 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to redefining care for all, Advocate Health provides more than $6 billion in annual community benefits.

###