

Stay Safe This Sick Season: Community Steps to Prevent the Spread of Rising Respiratory Illnesses

Atrium Health Floyd implementing visitor restrictions to help protect patients

ROME, Ga., Jan. 8, 2025 – As respiratory illnesses rise, Atrium Health Floyd is urging everyone to take steps to protect themselves and those around them. Simple actions, like staying up to date on vaccinations, practicing good hygiene and staying home when unwell, can help keep individuals, families and communities safer this sick season.

Health experts strongly recommend the following to limit the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- **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, including the flu shot, the new RSV vaccine and the updated COVID vaccine.
- **Practice good respiratory hygiene:** 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:

- **Primary Care:** Contact your primary care provider if you have flu-like symptoms.
- **Urgent Care and Virtual Visits:** Consider these options for mild to moderate symptoms to avoid long wait times in emergency departments.

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

“The community can help slow the spread of respiratory illnesses by following these guidelines,” said Sheila Bennett, senior vice president and chief of patient services at Atrium Health Floyd. “These preventive measures are simple but can go a long way in protecting ourselves and those most vulnerable.”

Due to a sustained increase in respiratory viruses in our communities, Atrium Health Floyd is implementing temporary visitor restrictions in acute care hospitals, emergency departments, rehabilitation units, behavioral health, infusion centers and certain cancer areas effective Wednesday, Jan. 8. These restrictions apply to:

- **Visitor age limit:** Children 12 and under should not visit the locations listed above.
- **Masking policy:** Visitors will be asked to wear masks when in areas where direct patient care is provided and emergency department waiting areas.

These guidelines apply to Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center, Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center, Atrium Health Floyd Cherokee Medical Center, Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center Behavioral Health and our stand-alone Emergency Department in Chattooga County.

Atrium Health Floyd thanks all 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 facility.

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 Atrium Health

[Atrium Health](#) is a nationally recognized leader in shaping health outcomes through innovative research, education and compassionate patient care. Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, Atrium Health is part of [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, which was created from the combination with Advocate Aurora Health. A recognized leader in experiential medical education and groundbreaking research, [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) is its academic core. Atrium Health is renowned for its top-ranked pediatric, cancer and heart care, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Atrium Health is also a leading-edge innovator in virtual care and mobile medicine, providing care close to home and in the home. Ranked nationally among U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals in eight pediatric specialties and for rehabilitation, Atrium Health has also received the American Hospital Association's Quest for Quality Prize and its 2021 Carolyn Boone Lewis Equity of Care Award, as well as the 2020 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Health Equity Award for its efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in care. With a commitment to every community it serves, Atrium Health seeks to improve health, elevate hope and advance healing – for all, providing \$2.8 billion last year in free and uncompensated care and other community benefits.

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. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs 155,000 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 providing equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

###