

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

Atrium Health Navicent implements visitor restrictions to help protect patients

MACON, Ga., Jan. 8, 2025 – As respiratory illnesses rise, Atrium Health Navicent 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 Navicent 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 [NavicentHealth.org](https://www.NavicentHealth.org).

“By taking a few simple precautions, everyone can play a role in slowing the spread of respiratory illnesses in our community this season,” said Atrium Health Navicent Chief Medical Officer [Dr. Patrice Walker](#). “These preventive measures can make a huge difference in protecting ourselves and those most vulnerable.”

Due to a sustained increase in respiratory viruses in our communities, Atrium Health Navicent 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 effective Wednesday, Jan. 8. These restrictions apply to:

- **Visitor age limit:** Children 12 and under, and anyone with respiratory symptoms, 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 waiting areas.

While Atrium Health Navicent’s skilled nursing facilities will not have any age-related visitation restrictions, visitors at these sites will be asked to wear masks when in areas where direct patient care is provided and in waiting areas.

Atrium Health Navicent 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 Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

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 more than \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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