Requests for Personal Pets in the Hospital

This paper tells you what you need to know if you want your personal pet (dog or cat only) to visit you in the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics or American Family Children’s Hospital (UWHC). You may ask to have your dog or cat visit you when you have been in the hospital for at least 21 days in a row, you are not expected to go home from the hospital, or other special conditions exist. Please read the rules below and talk with your nurse if you would like to make a request.

The manager of your unit may approve a visit by one personal pet at a time for no more than two hours and set a date, time, and place for the visit if:

- Your doctor writes in the chart that a visit is okay.
- Your pet can behave in a hospital. Please understand that some pets who are usually well-behaved have a hard time being good in the hospital because hospitals are stressful places for animals (full of strange smells and sounds).
- Your pet has an up-to-date Wisconsin license and wears a license tag.
- Your pet has an up-to-date rabies vaccine and wears a rabies vaccine tag.
- Your pet’s vaccine and health records are available upon request
- Your pet is healthy with no infections, open wounds, stitches, or estrus (heat in females). Signs of infection include vomiting, diarrhea, leaking urine or stool, coughing, sneezing, and runny nose.

Rules for Your Pet’s Visit

If the manager of your unit approves a visit by your pet and sets a date, time, and place for the visit, your pet’s visit must take place when and where the manager tells you. You must also follow these rules:

- In nearly all cases, managers choose the clinic lobby as the place for the pet visit and choose the evening or weekend as the time for the pet visit. Very rarely will a manager allow a pet to be in a patient’s room. If your pet is allowed to visit you in your room and be on your bed, a towel or sheet will be placed on your bed for your pet to be on before your pet gets on the bed. When the visit is over, the towel or sheet will be taken off your bed.
- Your pet will be clean, well groomed, and free from parasites.
- If you have a dog, your dog will be bathed within 24 hours of the visit and free of ticks and fleas.
- If you have a cat, your cat will be groomed with an anti-allergen product within 24 hours of the visit and free of ticks and fleas.
- If you have a cat, your cat will be bathed within 24 hours of the visit and free of ticks and fleas.
- If your pet has recently been treated for an infection, it may visit no earlier than one week after it is done taking antibiotics and the infection is gone. You may need to provide a letter of health from your pet’s licensed veterinarian before your pet is allowed to visit.
- You will wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after you touch your pet.
- An adult handler will be in charge of the care of your pet while it is at
• UWHC. At all times, your pet must be under the full control of the handler.
• Your pet will be kept on a short, non-retractable leash that is less than 6 feet long. Small dogs and cats may be brought in a carrier, but must be on a leash when out of the carrier.
• Your pet will be toileted and waste disposed of before coming into the building.
• If your pet has an accident, the handler will clean up the waste, dispose of it by flushing, and ask staff to have the area sanitized.
• Your pet will be well-behaved. Your pet won’t jump, snarl, growl, yip, whimper, bark, hiss, or scratch. Your pet will be housebroken and fully socialized.
• Your pet will not be in an area that requires protective gowns, unless cleared by the doctor on your unit and/or Infection Control.
• Your pet and its handler will leave UWHC property right away if any of the rules written in this paper are not met.

Your Responsibility for Your Pet
Please know that “I” refers to “you” here. I understand that it is a privilege, not a right, for UWHC to allow my pet to visit me. I understand that UWHC may withdraw permission for my pet to visit me or be on UWHC property at any time. I also understand and agree to the following:
• My pet has to meet all of the rules written in this paper at all times. If my pet doesn’t meet these rules, its handler will be asked to remove my pet from UWHC property right away. If the handler can’t remove my pet, I agree that UWHC may take any action to control and remove my pet.
• If my pet bites someone, I will tell UWHC security, UWHC Patient Relations, or the manager on my unit right away so that steps may be taken to limit the spread of disease. I understand that all animal bites must be reported to the University of Wisconsin Police Department at 262-2957. I agree to work with UWHC security to report the bite and make sure all involved follow any rabies observation period required by law. If I am unwilling or unable to report a bite, I authorize UWHC security to notify police.
• I understand that, under law, I am responsible for the actions of my pet. I understand I will be held responsible by UWHC for injuries or damages caused by my pet.
• I understand UWHC and its staff aren’t and can’t be responsible for my pet. I understand that hospitals may not be safe places for pets. If my animal is hurt during its visit, I understand that I alone am responsible.
• I understand that I may read Policy #1.50 for related questions or concerns about personal pet visits to UWHC. I will also have to complete form UWH#301571-DT.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2017 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing H#7600.