

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Will families and loved ones be able to view the body of a patient with COVID-19 who dies while in the hospital?

For the safety of our patients, visitors and caregivers we reduced the number of visitors in the hospital to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Only those present at the time of death will be allowed to visit briefly with the body of their loved one, at the discretion of the attending medical team.

For everyone's safety, bodies of patients with COVID-19 will be moved quickly to the morgue. Funeral homes are well equipped to prepare bodies for safe viewing and it is best to defer viewing until then.

How do caregivers know they will be protected from exposure to patients with COVID-19, living or dead?

Our goal is to create a safe environment, protect patient privacy, and attend to the needs of caregivers. Caregivers who will be making direct contact with a patient with COVID-19 (including patient transporters, environmental services workers, protective services workers, and morgue workers) are all informed, trained to follow PPE precautions, and empowered to verify information before contact. In addition, all caregivers are monitored daily, including temperature checks, for health risks.

Why can't my family get an autopsy done on our loved one at this time?

If there is a consent for an autopsy for a patient who died as an inpatient in one of our hospitals, an autopsy will be done. If the patient is suspected or diagnosed with COVID19, the autopsy will be limited in scope.

What happens with a Muslim or Orthodox Jewish patient who dies with COVID-19? Will they do the ritual washing* of the body?

Funeral homes are equipped to handle the special religious ritual washing of these patient bodies while also following the necessary precautions for prevention of spreading the disease. If an autopsy is requested by the family of any of these patients, they should be made aware that delays may happen due to autopsy service hours. The family must decide how to proceed, with full knowledge of the time constraints.

Should everyone who dies with COVID-19 be cremated?

Cremation is not necessary for a safe disposition of a patient's remains. The decision to cremate should be based on your loved one's wishes. Funeral homes are equipped to prevent the spread of disease in either case. The Body Donation Program is temporarily suspended.

Who can caregivers or families call if we have questions about death arrangements for patients with COVID-19?

The Center for Spiritual Care has Family Liaisons who work closely with funeral homes and can be reached at 216-444-4990.