



Information for relatives visiting the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

at Princess Royal Hospital (PRH)

Introduction

This information booklet has been provided to give you some general information about the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

When your relative is admitted they will be seen and assessed by the ICU doctors and nurses. This may take more than an hour because we are assessing the patient's most immediate needs. During this time we may need to insert drips and attach the patient to any necessary equipment. We ask for your patience at this time. The patient is always our priority. However, we will try to keep you updated as frequently as possible.

Patients tend to be connected to a lot of equipment which helps us to monitor them and give appropriate treatment. Please ask if you have any queries/concerns/need additional explanations as it can all seem overwhelming.

When can I visit?

- We suggest the following visiting times as we can be very busy in the morning and so prefer no visitors before 11 am. We also find that it is beneficial for our patients to have a rest between 1 pm and 2.30 pm. When patients are very unstable there are no restrictions. Please ask the nurse in charge if there are any problems as times are negotiable.
- We suggest that only close family visit and that only two visitors be at the bedside at any time, thus allowing the nurse space in which to continue caring for your relative.
- Children can visit but this should be discussed with the nurse caring for your relative. Children should be supervised at all times.

- Each time you visit please ring the doorbell and wait until we answer. If there is a delay it may be because we are busy. Please be patient; try again in a few minutes. Please also close the doors after you.
- On entering and leaving the Unit, please use the alcohol gel in the dispensers to clean your hands. This is an important part of infection control.

When can I telephone the Unit?

- You can telephone at any time. The nurse looking after your relative will inform you of their condition. It would be appreciated if you could nominate a family member to call daily then pass the information through the family. This means the nurse is not called away from caring for your relative too frequently.
- Please also be aware that nursing staff cannot give out detailed information over the telephone.
- The telephone number for the Unit is:
01444 441881 Extn. 8182 or 8190.

Can I use my mobile telephone in the Unit?

- For the privacy and dignity of all our patients and visitors, it is hospital policy for mobiles to be switched off before entering the hospital.
- If absolutely necessary you can use your mobile outside the ICU area (in the corridor) or in the visitor's room if it is not disturbing other visitors.

Who will be involved in my relative's care?

- Each day a Consultant will review each patient on the Unit. This can be quite a lengthy process. There is also a doctor based on the Unit called a Senior House Officer (SHO).
- There are notes at the end of each patient's bed – we would like to remind you that they are confidential. However, should relatives wish to be up-dated on the patient's care then we will arrange for one of our doctors to speak with you.
- A staff nurse will be responsible for one or two patients. There is also a specially trained health care assistant on the Unit. A sister, charge nurse or senior staff nurse is responsible for each shift.
- Part of student nurse training involves a few weeks in ICU - during this time they will be closely supervised by the staff nurse.
- Other members of the ward-based team are the ward manager, ward clerk and the domestic staff.

What other health professionals might I see?

- **Physiotherapists** visit daily and assess each patient, helping to clear their lungs. They also exercise patients' joints to enable them to keep a good range of movement. This is important when they begin to undergo rehabilitation such as walking again.
- **Pharmacists** and pharmacy technicians ensure that the medication written on the medicine charts is appropriate, accurate and safe to administer. They advise doctors on the medicines on ward rounds. Technicians are responsible for ensuring adequate stock levels are available.

- **Radiographers** come onto the Unit to take X-rays of patients mainly with a portable machine. During this procedure we will ask relatives to move to a safe distance. Occasionally patients have to be moved for more specialist X-rays such as a CT scan or MRI Scan.
- **Dietitians** visit three times a week to ensure the patient is receiving the correct amount of calories and appropriate nutrition.
- **Microbiologists** are doctors who specialise in the advising and monitoring of infections and their prevention. They also advise on appropriate antibiotic use.
- **Hospital Chaplains** are available at any time for patients and relatives. They are always willing to listen and give support. For up-to-date information on services please see the notice board in the relatives' room. If you have any special religious or spiritual needs, please advise a member of the nursing staff who will contact the Chaplains for you.
- **Specialist Nurses** are specially trained nurses who we may call on for advice. For example with regards to pain control, diabetes, or wound care.

What items of property can I bring in?

- We have very limited storage space for personal belongings but we would like you to bring in toiletries such as soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner and a hair brush/comb. Toothpaste and a small headed toothbrush or battery powered toothbrush are the best for mouth care especially when the patient may have a tube in their mouth. Also bring in disposable razors and shaving foam for those that need

them. If your relative has false teeth, glasses or a hearing aid, it would be useful to have them for when they are awake.

Jewellery and valuables

- For safety reasons and safekeeping, we will remove all jewellery, especially rings as patients' hands can swell. Should we be unable to remove rings, then we may have to cut them off and give them to you when you next visit.
- Any money or other valuables will also be returned to you as we cannot be responsible for their safekeeping.

Flowers

- Unfortunately flowers or floral arrangements are not appropriate in the Unit.

Where can I find refreshments?

- In the relatives room on the Unit we have a hot water dispenser. We try to have some freely available hot drinks in this room. Please speak to the domestic/nurse in charge if there is a problem.
- On the second floor there is a Restaurant, open from 7 am to 7.30 pm daily and Tempo Coffee Bar (also situated in the Restaurant area), which is open from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday.
- On the ground floor by Main Reception there is a League of Friends Coffee Shop open from 8 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday and 2 pm to 5 pm, Saturday and Sunday.
- The WRVS Shop, also situated on the ground floor, is open from 8.30 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday, 11 am to 6 pm, on Saturday and 11 am to 5 pm on Sunday.

Where can I park the car?

There are three patient and visitor car parks. These are car park 1, car park 2 and car park 4. All these car parks are close to the main hospital. Weekly passes are available at a reduced rate, please speak to the units ward clerk for the necessary forms to get help arranging this.

Where can I find further information?

Other BSUH booklets you may find useful are:

[Welcome to Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust](#)
[Your bereavement: living through it](#)

Please ask a member of staff for these.

Bereavement

Unfortunately, not all patients will survive. Should this be so we will aim to make your relative comfortable and prepare him/her for a peaceful and dignified death. During this time we will try to give you and your family as much support or privacy as we can. Additional support is available from the Hospital Chaplaincy and Bereavement team. Please ask a member of staff to contact them for you.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

In the first instance ask the nurse looking after your relative. Alternatively the shift leader or the ward manager will gladly try to help you with any questions or suggestions that you may have.

If you do not understand this leaflet, we can arrange for an interpreter.

إذا كنت لا تستطيع فهم محتويات هذه النشرة فيمكننا عمل الترتيبات لتوفير مترجم شفوي لك.

এই প্রচারপুস্তিকাকাটি যদি আপনি বুঝতে না পারেন, তবে আপনার জন্য আমরা একজন অনুবাদকের ব্যবস্থা করে দিতে পারি

如你唔明白本單張的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

如你唔明白本傳單的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

اگر مندرجات این جزوه را نمیفهمید، ما می‌توانیم مترجم در اختیارتان بگذاریم.

Jeśli masz trudności w zrozumieniu tej ulotki, możemy zorganizować tłumacza.

Written by Jenny Greening

© Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust Disclaimer
The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only
and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice
by a qualified practitioner.

Reference No.161.2

Date: April 2016 Review date: April 2018