



Welcome to the Critical Care unit, which is situated on Level 2 of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham.

Our unit is divided into four areas: A,B,C and D. Patients are admitted to any one of these areas and may move from one area to another, depending on their clinical need.

We are one team delivering the same care throughout the unit.

Contact numbers:

Critical Care A: 0121 371 6330

Critical Care B: 0121 371 2823

Critical Care C: 0121 371 2578

Critical Care D: 0121 371 2825

My relative has been admitted to Critical Care

Having a relative in Critical Care can be a stressful time for you and your family. This leaflet aims to provide you with some key pieces of information which will help make this time more manageable for you.

What do I do when I arrive at Critical Care?

To enter the unit we have a buzzer and intercom system. Please press the buzzer and when it is answered say who you are and who you have come to visit. Sometimes it is not possible to let you in straight away because a procedure of care is being carried out. If this is the case, the staff will advise you when to buzz again. On entering the unit, please use the hand gel by the door to clean your hands.



Who looks after my relative when they are in Critical Care?

Patients in Critical Care are cared for by an experienced nurse. The staffing levels are higher than the normal ward such that one nurse will look after one or two patients.

This nurse will be responsible for your relatives care during their shift. Please ask them if you have any questions or concerns so that we can deal with any worries you may have. It is helpful to know what the best extension number is to telephone the unit on so that you can speak directly to the nurse looking after your relative.

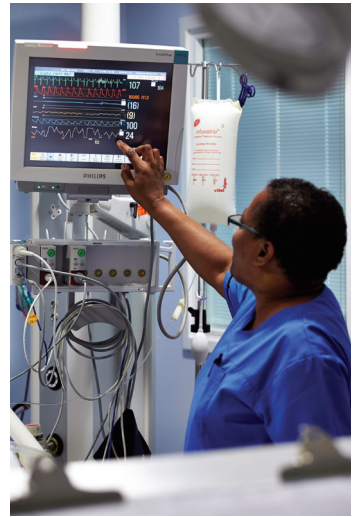


Please use extension.....you may phone at any time but it is helpful to us if you choose one family member to do this. We would also ask that you do not use your mobile phone to make calls when you are visiting on the unit.

When can I visit my relative?

Visiting time on Critical Care is **11:00–19:00**.

If you have any difficulties with visiting, please tell us so we can try to meet your needs. At times during visiting we may have to ask you to leave your relative while a procedure or care is being carried out. Please use this time for yourself to have a meal break, drink or rest as visiting someone in critical care can be very exhausting. We suggest that while your relative is in the unit, visiting is kept to immediate family members only. We allow two visitors at a time by the bed. Following discussion with the nursing staff, children may visit under the supervision of an adult.



It's noisy in Critical Care, is this normal?

It can be noisy in Critical Care especially during the day. There may be beeping noises and alarm sounds from some of the equipment. This is normal and does not necessarily mean that something is wrong.

What will my relative look like?

Your relative may look very different from the last time you saw them. They will be nursed in a gown and they may be attached to a lot of equipment. The nurse will be happy to explain what the equipment is for.

What are all those machines for?

When you see your relative for the first time in Critical Care they might be surrounded by a great deal of equipment and monitoring devices. This can feel overwhelming at first but as your relative recovers, much of this equipment will be removed.



Can I touch my relative?

Tubes and wires often surround a patient in Critical Care. It is possible to touch your relative but it is sensible to ask the nurse first.

Can I talk to my relative?

During the early part of their treatment patients in Critical Care are often unconscious. A patient may be able to hear even if they cannot respond. Staff do talk to unconscious patients and tell them what is happening and we would encourage you to do the same.



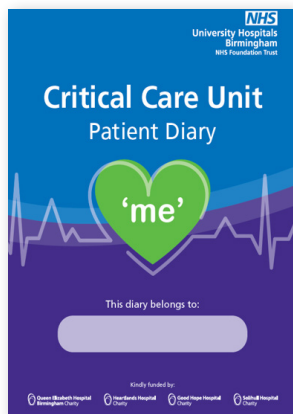
Am I able to help with care?

There are many aspects of care that you can help with, such as helping with a wash, mouth care, shaving, applying cream to hands and feet. If you would like to help with personal care no matter how small, please talk to the nurse looking after your relative so they can show you how.

Is there anything I can bring in or do to help you with the care of my relative?

Space for personal items in Critical Care is limited, however you are welcome to bring in such things as personal washing items e.g. creams/lotions for massaging hands and feet, deodorant, perfume sprays or aftershave that your relative likes.

Patients who have been critically ill can often experience delirium. This means they can hallucinate; they may have difficulty remembering things and can feel quite paranoid or appear very withdrawn. They may at times become very restless and resist treatment. It is usually temporary. This can be very distressing for family and friends but you can help by reassuring them, talking with them and keeping



a diary to help them piece together what has happened.

If your family member is mechanically ventilated for more than 4 days or has a stay on the critical care unit for more than 7 days, an ICU Patient Diary may be offered. The diary helps to fill in some memory gaps for a patient and allows you to tell us more about your relative, all of which will help us in looking after them.

Can I see the doctor looking after my relative?

The main doctor's ward round on Critical Care starts at 09:00. Here the doctors and nurses will review and plan the care and treatment required for your relative.

If you would like to speak to a member of the medical team, please ask the nurse looking after your relative and they will arrange this for you.

Can I be involved in the decisions regarding the care of my relative?

Of course, involving you in the decisions of care is of the utmost importance to us. However, as it is not always possible to represent your relative all hours of the day, there will be some decisions we will need to make in your absence.



There are many decisions that are made every day about the care of your relative. We are happy to support you and involve you in these decisions.

The critical care environment can be stressful and overwhelming at times. Maintaining respectful relationships between staff and visitors in critical care are very important for maintaining patient well-being, safety and effective communication.

Where can I get something to eat?

It is important for you, as a relative, to keep yourself well, so making sure you're having food and drink is vitally important. Here on Level 2 there is the Plaza Restaurant which serves sandwiches, hot meals and drinks. This is open from 07:30–20:00, seven days a week. Along the Critical Care corridor between areas B and C and areas C and D, you will find vending machines selling snacks and hot drinks. In the main entrance of the hospital there is a Costa kiosk with a cashpoint and a branch of WH Smiths.

Where can I stay for the night?

If you require overnight accommodation close to the hospital please see the following website for booking information for Peter Scott House - <https://www.uhb.nhs.uk/services/accommodation>. Please ask a member of staff about this should you feel you need to stay. Generally if your relative is stable we would encourage you to go home to rest at the end of visiting, and only use the visitors' rooms overnight in an emergency. There are a number of hotels and bed and breakfasts near to the hospital. For military families accommodation is available in Fisher House located within the hospital grounds.

Where can I park and how much does it cost?

Car parking for visitors is available in car park A and D. Car park A is the nearest to the main entrance of the hospital. You may find it more cost effective to buy a weekly pass from the Q-Park office in Car Park A.

Other support you may wish to consider

We do have chaplains and faith leaders who are happy to support you and the patient while you are in Critical Care. Please speak to your nurse if you would like to speak to someone from the Chaplaincy team. Sometimes our visitor's rooms are very busy – if you feel you want



some peace you can visit the chapel or prayer rooms located in the Faith and Community Centre on level 1 of QEHB.

If you have any questions at all the nursing staff will be happy to answer these. Please feel free to speak to a member of the team.

Follow Up Services available to critical care patients and their families

Once considered well enough, patients will be stepped down from the Critical Care Unit to a ward. Where patients have had a stay in the Critical Care Unit for greater than 7 days, they will be seen on the ward by one of the Critical Care Follow Up Nurses. This gives the patient the opportunity to talk about their memories from their critical care stay and support both the patient and their family with the transition from Critical Care to the ward. Following discharge home, the Critical Care Follow Up Nurses will also offer a Critical Care Follow Up appointment for patients and their families three months post-discharge home to review progress plus provide the opportunity to visit the Critical Care Unit.

For further information contact the Critical Care Follow Up Service on 0121 371 2830 or email CriticalCareFollowUp@uhb.nhs.uk

How did we do? 😊 😐 😞

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. **Thank you. www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft**



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If you require this information in another format such as braille, please email **interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk**

Critical Care

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