



A practical guide to visiting Critical Care

Welcome to Heartlands Hospital Site Critical Care Units, ITU and ITU7, which are situated on Floor 1 and 2 of the Tower Block.

Patients can be admitted to either unit and may move between units depending on clinical need. We are one team delivering the same care across both units.

Contact numbers:

ITU First Floor: 0121 424 1419 or 0121 424 2419

ITU Ward 7 Second Floor: 0121 424 2575 or 0121 424 1507

My relative has been admitted to Critical Care

Having a relative in Critical Care can be a worrying 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 tell us 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 usually cared for by an experienced nurse.

This nurse will be responsible for your relative's 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, 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. Children under 12 years old are not allowed into Critical Care unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please speak to the Nurse in Charge about exception visiting circumstances.

During visiting hours we would like to encourage a 'rest period' for our patients between the hours of 3-5pm where we will dim the lights and encourage our staff to carry out only essential interventions for our patients and reduce interactions. We aim to keep the unit relaxed and calm during this period for our patients. This is beneficial for recovery. You may wish to leave during this 'rest period' or alternatively we would politely ask you to sit quietly in the bed-space during this time.

During visiting hours we may also ask you to wait outside the unit for medical ward rounds, to provide personal care to patients or manage emergencies on our units. Please be patient and we will always invite you back into the unit at the first available opportunity.

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

It can be noisy in Critical Care, especially during the day. There may be bleeping 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.

You may also wish to keep a diary for them, patients find this very helpful once they get better as it helps to explain what has happened to them in Critical Care. You might like to bring in some photographs that your relative will recognise.

You can also fill in an 'About me' booklet (pictured), which tells us more about your relative, all of which will help us in looking after them. These are available on the unit. Please ask a member of staff for one.

If your family member is currently on a ventilator to help them breathe from the time they are first admitted to the unit, or if they have been with us for more than 7 days, you will be offered a diary.

Can I see the doctor looking after my relative?

The doctors' 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.

AFFIX LABEL

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

All about me

Dear patient, relative or carer,

We are always trying to improve the care we provide to patients and aim to ensure all feel safe and cared for while in hospital. In order for us to personalise the care that we are giving to you, it would be very helpful if you could take the time to fill in this 'All About Me' booklet. A friend or relative may complete it on your behalf and return it to the nurse in charge. If you would like to keep a copy of the completed form, the nurse in charge will be happy to copy it for you.

Name

Title

Yours sincerely,

Ward staff

Dignity in Care



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 our patients, we are happy to support you, and involve you in these decisions.

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.

On site we have Café One Restaurant where there is both a Starbucks counter and a food court. You can find Cafe One at the Main Entrance, on the ground floor. Starbucks opens earlier than the dining area.

Opening times:

Weekdays:

Starbucks: 08:00–19:00

Dining Area: 08:30–15:00

Weekends:

Starbucks: 09:00–15:00

Dining Area: 09:00–14:30

Where can I park and how much does it cost?

Car parking is situated at the front of the hospital via the Bordesley Green Entrance.

Standard parking charges apply across all UHB hospital sites.

For patients who are in our units for a longer stay (greater than seven days) please ask the Nurse in Charge for a '20 Exit Carnet Form'.

Other support you may wish to consider

We 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 Faith Centre Chapel or prayer rooms. Wudu facilities are available 24/7, located off the ground floor corridor by the Charity Hub.

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.

Services available to critical care patients and their families

Patient Discharge Support Pack

On discharge from Critical Care, your relative will be provided with a 'Critical Care specific discharge resource pack' of recovery information and signposting to resources to support the initial stages of recovery once the patient is discharged home. If the patient has not received one, please contact the unit and we can provide one.

ITU follow-up

We offer coffee mornings to our patients on an alternating month basis to provide support during recovery for our patients and relatives. You will be contacted by the ITU Follow Up Team on discharge from hospital.

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



Accessibility

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