



High Dependency Unit (HDU)

Information for patients and relatives

This leaflet aims to give simple and practical information about the High Dependency Unit (HDU). We know that it can be a very worrying time for you and hope that this information will answer some of your questions. If you require any further information or advice please ask a member of our team.

About the Unit

High dependency unit is a specialised facility that uses a wide range of equipment, monitoring devices and supportive treatments to assist with the care of our patients.

The HDU consists of 6 beds with some side rooms. We provide care for adults with a variety of medical and surgical conditions and admit both emergency and planned admissions.

The unit is a mixed sex unit but you will be placed into a same sex section of the unit. Every effort is made to ensure that the privacy, dignity and modesty of our patients is maintained, however there are times when priority is given to a patient's clinical care (for example when a patient's clinical condition requires urgent admission to the unit).

It is also likely that you will be cared for by a mixed sex team; these include doctors, nurses and other staff. On these occasions, steps will be taken to respect your privacy. If you prefer to be cared for by staff of the same sex as yourself, then we will make every effort to try and support this but there are times when this may not be possible.

The High Dependency Team

We work closely as a team and aim to provide the highest standard of nursing care. Patient care in the unit is managed by a team of Surgeons, Anaesthetists, Physicians, Registrars. Every patient is cared for by a

qualified nurse who will assess, implement and evaluate your care needs, liaise with other members of the team and involve you and your relatives in your care as much as possible. Both the doctors and nurses will keep you informed of your plan of care, provide you with information and answer any questions that you may have.

Doctors visit patients on the unit regularly, but if you or your relative wish to speak to a member of the surgical team, please ask the Nurse caring for you and this will be arranged at the earliest opportunity. Alternatively, appointments can be arranged with your Consultant via their secretary.

Other members of the care team include the Rapid Response Team, Nurse Specialists, Physiotherapists, Radiographers, Pharmacists and Dieticians. They all visit the unit regularly and assist or advise about various aspects of patient care.

What is it like to be an HDU patient?

HDU is not only for poorly patients but also for patients who need close monitoring for a specific reason. In HDU a wide variety of equipment is used to monitor a patient's condition. This can be quite frightening for patients and relatives but are all there to help provide the best possible care.

Leads and wires which are attached to a monitor will be connected to the patient. Numbers and waves will be seen that shows the patient's blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation. There may be a wound drain, urinary catheter and cannulas. An oxygen mask or nasal prong may be placed on the patient to give oxygen. They may also require some extra support with their breathing that will be supported by the patient wearing a



High Dependency Unit (HDU) : Information for patients and relatives

tight-fitting mask and attached to a machine.

HDU patients are generally cared for in bed but if patient is able to mobilise we will encourage this before they leave the unit. Nurses are always available and a call bell will be provided.

Visiting Times

Visiting can be from 8am till 8pm but the unit tends to be busiest during the mornings when consultants do their rounds and nurses give assistance to patients with washing so we would prefer if visiting was limited during this time.

Only two visitors are allowed at each bed at any one time. If children wish to visit please liaise with the Nurse in charge to discuss.

HDU patients generally require a quiet atmosphere and peaceful environment after surgery. We ask that visitors to the unit are respectful of the needs of all patients, in relation to privacy, sleep and rest.

How can I contact the unit?

You can contact HDU by calling 0121 685 4272 and enquires may be made at any time.

We request that only one family member takes responsibility for contacting the unit to enquire about their relative's condition. This information can then be relayed by this person to the rest of the patients' family and friends. This assists staff by saving them time which can then be devoted to patient care. We hope that you understand our reasons for this request.

What information can be given

To preserve patient confidentiality only general information will be given over the telephone. Detailed medical and surgical information will not be discussed over the telephone.

Mobile phones

Patients are allowed to use their mobile phones while in HDU but phones should be switched to silent at all times. Visitors are asked to refrain from using their mobile phones whilst inside the unit.

What should I bring with me?

Please bring adequate toiletries for hygiene such as deodorant, shower gel or creams, aftershave or perfume as these products often help you feel fresher and more comfortable. You may also be able to use your own nightwear the day after surgery. Any bags and suitcases containing property that is not required, plus any valuables will be sent home for safe keeping as the hospital will not be responsible for any losses. Unfortunately it is not possible to store or refrigerate large quantities of additional food brought in by relatives.

Meals (if allowed to eat)

Choice is offered for meals, including specialist diets and cultural requirements. Cold and hot drinks are available at all times.

Breakfast	7:00am
Lunch	12:15pm
Supper	5:15pm

Infection Control

In the interest of our patients, we are committed in maintaining a clean and safe environment. Hand hygiene is a very important factor in controlling infection. We therefore request that all visitors wash their hands and use the hand gel dispensers by the main HDU doors, prior to visiting and when leaving the Unit.

Some patients are nursed in a side room and may have special hygiene requirements so we ask you to speak to the nurses before entering the room. The nurses will give advice on what



High Dependency Unit (HDU) : Information for patients and relatives

you must do if this is the case with your relative.

Fresh flowers and plants are not allowed on the unit, this is a safety precaution as they can harbour harmful bacteria.

Discharge from HDU

Once your condition improves or is responding well to the care and treatment, the whole care team, including doctors will do a thorough assessment before you are transferred to a ward. The team will inform you of the plan of care and you can always express any concerns and queries. Discharge from HDU to a ward is an important step towards recovery, rehabilitation and good health.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are here to help you if you experience any problems or concerns.

They will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and provide advice and support with the aim of resolving any problems or difficulties that you experience quickly and effectively. The PALS Office can be contacted from Monday to Friday at 8:30am to 5:00pm on 0121 685 4128. There is also a PALS leaflet available if you need one.

Any Questions

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to ask us. Every member of the team is here to advise, help and support you and your family whilst your relative is in our care. Our direct phone number is: 0121 685 4272.

Comments & suggestions

If you have any comments or suggestions about the HDU and the service you have received or are receiving, you can approach any member of our team or you can complete our patient satisfaction survey.

Contact Details

HDU Direct line: 0121 685 4272