



Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

Information Leaflet for Relatives



**Department of
Critical Care Medicine**

Critical Care Medicine

Someone you know has been admitted to the Critical Care Department {Intensive Care Unit (ICU) / High Dependency Unit (HDU)}. This can be a very difficult time and we hope this leaflet helps you understand the care they are receiving. If you have any questions or concerns please talk to our nursing or medical staff – we are happy to help.

What is Critical Care?

Critical Care is a specialised area where we care for people with severe or life-threatening illnesses. This may include providing support for multiple organ systems, including machines to support lung and kidney function and medications or a machine to support heart function and blood pressure. In ICU patients often require multiple organ supports. In HDU patients generally require only one organ support or have shown some recovery in their illness.

Staff

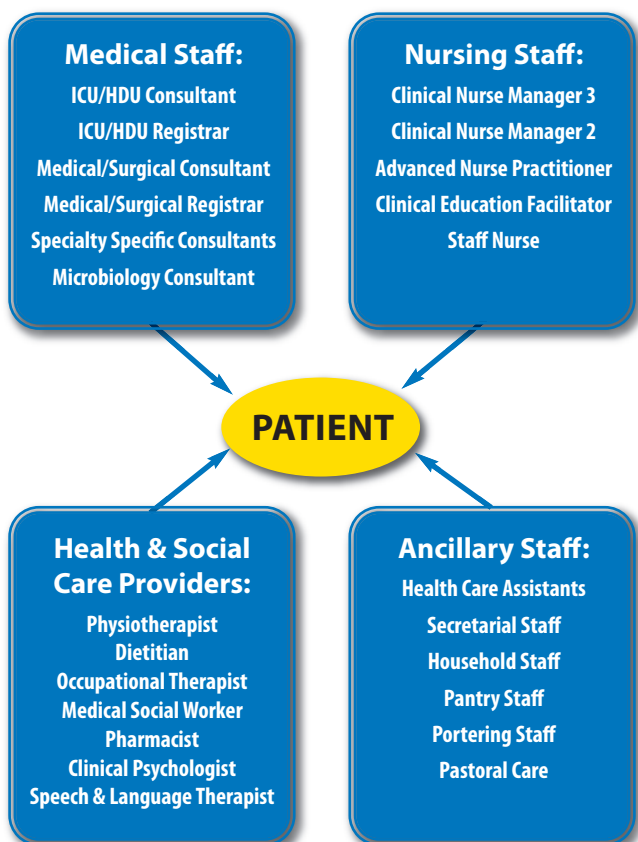
Care is provided by a multidisciplinary team of health care professionals, including the patient's referring consultant, outlined in the figure over. The ICU/HDU consultant is responsible for this team.

Who gets admitted?

Admission to Critical Care may be planned or unplanned due to severe illness.

Planned: usually after surgery such as heart surgery, surgery on major blood vessels or major abdominal surgery.

Unplanned: admission via the Emergency Department or following transfer from a ward or another hospital, if more specialised care is needed.



Effects of Critical Care on Patients:

People admitted to Critical Care often receive medications to treat pain and ensure comfort. They may appear more comfortable when asleep but it is better for their recovery if they can be awake and interacting with staff as much as possible.

Behaviour and mood may be affected by critical illness. Patients may appear confused and upset or fail to recognise family and friends whilst unwell. This is common and usually improves as they start to recover. You can help by talking to and reassuring them during your visit or by bringing in some personal belongings e.g. family photos.

If a patient is sedated a breathing tube may be in place and as a result they may not be able to talk to you, but they may understand you, so talk to them. Reassure them that their voice will return when the tube is removed.

People's muscles / joints often become weak and/or stiff during a severe illness making it difficult for them to move normally. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy will help to rebuild muscle / joint strength once they are on the path to recovery.

It is possible that some of these problems may persist after discharge from Critical Care and the hospital. You can obtain further information on this in the Mater Post-ICU Discharge Information Leaflet. Some patients are reviewed 2-3 months after their Critical Care discharge in the Mater Post-ICU Clinic. If your loved one has not been referred to this clinic, but you think this might be helpful, you can ask a member of the team or alternatively email icmed@mater.ie or telephone 01-8032773.

Daily routine

Although care and activity in the ICU/HDU is 24hr/day, there are some reference times:

Morning ward round: 07:30-09:30

Patient rest period: 12:30-13:30

Evening ward round: 16:30-18:00

Visiting

Visiting times: (Mon – Sun) 14:00-16:00/18:30-20:00
Only 2 visitors at the bedside at any one time.

It is important that you are able to visit and are involved in the care of your loved one. When you arrive for your visit please use the telephone in the visitor's waiting area to let us know that you are here and we will let you in as soon as possible. On occasion you may be asked to wait before coming in, in order to facilitate essential care. We will try to keep disruptions to a minimum during your visit.

Please wash your hands or use alcohol hand gel on entering and leaving the Critical Care area. This will help to protect you and your loved one.

Please switch off your mobile phone before entering the Critical Care area. To ensure patient privacy, no cameras are permitted.

Limited accommodation may be available for families of patients who are critically unwell. Accommodation is prioritised for those visiting outside the greater Dublin area. Please speak to a clinical nurse manager to discuss further.

Communication with Staff

The bedside nurse will provide you with regular updates on progress. It is best if one family member or friend is identified as the source of contact for clinical updates. A meeting with the Critical Care consultant or member of the team can be arranged by speaking with the bedside nurse. If you require a translator for these meetings please let the nurse know and we can arrange this at no cost to you.

ICU / HDU Contact Numbers

ICU: 01-8032763 (9-5 Mon-Fri) / 01-8032356 /
01-8032577

HDU: 01-8607846 (9-5 Mon-Fri) / 01-8032915 /
01-8032754

Patient Belongings

As patients start to recover it may be helpful for them to have some of their personal belongings e.g. pyjamas, slippers, dressing gown, toiletries. Please liaise with the bedside nurse to determine what is required. Unfortunately we ask that you do not bring food, hot drinks or flowers into Critical Care.

Self-Care

Having a family member or friend in Critical Care can be extremely stressful. Please be sure to take care of yourself. Remember to eat and sleep / rest regularly so

that you will be able to care for your relative or friend. Where possible, make a plan with the bedside nurse as to how best to contact family / friends in the event of an unexpected change in the patient's condition.

Facilities

Public toilets:

- Relatives waiting area ICU/HDU
- Whitty Building Level 0, North Circular Road entrance
- Whitty Building Level 1, Opposite C-lifts and opposite phlebotomy reception
- Whitty Building Level 2, beside radiology reception (disabled toilet)
- McGivney Building Level 3, beside Café Sol.

ATM:

- McGivney Wing Level 1, Eccles Street entrance.
- Whitty Wing Level 0, Londis Shop

Refreshments:

- Café Sol Level 1 McGivney Building: Mon-Sat 07:00-19:30, Sun & Bank Holidays 09:00-16:00
- Café Sol Level 3 McGivney Building: Mon-Fri 07:00-16:00, Weekends & Bank Holidays closed
- Starbucks Café Level 1 Whitty Building: Mon-Fri 06:45-20:00, Weekends 11-18:30
- Londis Shop Level 0 Whitty Building: Mon-Fri 07:00-20:00, Sat 08:00-20:00, Sun 09:00-20:00

Pharmacy:

Meaghers Pharmacy Level 0 Whitty Building: Mon-Fri 09:00-18:00

Parking:

Both multi-storey and on-street parking available.

Further information available www.mater.ie

**Dr Amit Velagapudi, Dr Jennifer Hastings,
Ms Margaret Kellett
Department of Critical Care Medicine 2021**