

The Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit

Information for patients, family, friends and caregivers



Being in hospital or having a family member or friend in the hospital can be stressful. We hope this pamphlet answers some of your questions about the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

Members of the health care team will be happy to answer any other questions you may have.



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About the unit

Our unit has the following programs:

- Geriatrics
- Eating Disorders
- General Psychiatry
- Psychiatric Intensive Care

Your health care team members may include:

- Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Social Workers
- Recreational Therapists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Ward Clerks
- Psychologists
- Pharmacists
- Spiritual Care
- Dietitians
- Psychiatric Assistants

What to expect when you are admitted

A nurse or Psychiatric Assistant will greet you and help you through the admission process.

This may include the following steps:

- **Initial Assessment:** This may include checking your blood pressure, measuring your height and weight, and asking you questions like how you are feeling and what brought you to the hospital.
- **Allergy assessment:** Your nurse will ask you if you have medication, food or the environmental allergies. If you have allergies, your nurse will give you a red allergy band. It is important to keep this band on all the time.

- **Identification (ID) wristband:** Your nurse will also give you an ID wristband with your name, date of birth and UHN medical record number. For your safety, you must wear your ID band at all times. We need to make sure we properly identify you before giving you medicines or doing tests.

What you need to know about safety

The Inpatient Psychiatry Unit is a locked unit. To enter and leave the unit, patients and visitors must press the buzzer for the door to unlock.

The Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) is also a locked unit. Patients and visitors need the staff to open the door to unlock it.

- **Belongings:** A staff member will search your belongings. Any items that can be a threat to the safety of patients, staff or visitors will be stored in the nursing station with your name on them. We return them to you when you leave the hospital.

Some examples of unsafe items are cords, belts, glass, sharp objects, electronics, metal cutlery and jewelry.

- **Valuables:** Your valuables are stored for you in a locked cabinet in the nursing station or in a safe at security.
- **Clothes:** To keep patients safe in the PICU, we will give you hospital gowns and pants to wear. Your clothes will be stored with your name on them and be given back to you either when you get discharged or get transferred to the unit.

All items or gifts brought in by a family member or friend are checked at the nursing station first

What are involuntary admissions?

When a doctor is concerned that a person poses a risk to themselves or others due to a mental illness, a person can be admitted to hospital against their will. This is called an **involuntary admission**. These decisions are based on the *Mental Health Act*.

Please ask for more information about this topic at the nursing station.

How do we share information with you?

The health care team will meet with you every day to talk about your treatment plan and goals. If you have any questions at any time we are always available to answer them.

How do we protect your privacy?

At Toronto General Hospital we believe in protecting the privacy of all our patients. We will only share information with your family and caregivers with your permission.

You can also help us protect your privacy and the privacy of others by:

- Not posting information about other patients, staff members, or the unit on any social media or websites
- Not taking photos or recording of other patients or staff while in hospital
- Not sharing any personal information about other patients in person or over the internet

For more information about how the hospital protects your privacy ask for a copy of our [Privacy at UHN](#) brochure or call the Privacy Office at 416 340 4800 ext. 6937.

What if I do not want people to know I am in the hospital?

Let us know and we will remove your patient room and phone number from our directory.

Wristband

What is a wristband?

For safety, all patients also have to wear a **coloured wristband**. The colour of your family member or friend's wristband depends on their treatment plan and care needs.

If you do not have a pink, yellow or green wristband:

- You must stay in the PICU only

If you have a pink trial wristband:

- You will be accompanied by a staff member for 15 minutes
- The staff member will explain what you need to know about the general ward

If you have a pink wristband:

- You may go from the PICU to the general ward by yourself during scheduled break times
- Groups are not included in pink times
- If you have visitors, PICU staff will let you know if you can meet with your visitors on the general ward

Who can change my wristband level?

Only your doctor can increase your privilege level. For example, give you a pink band.

Other staff members may temporarily stop you from leaving the PICU if they are worried about safety.

Activities of daily living

During your stay on the unit, try to do as much for yourself as possible. This helps you stay independent and prepares you to leave the hospital.

If you need help with your everyday activities, talk to your treatment team. They will work with you to develop a care plan.

- **Taking showers:** There is a shower on the unit. You may use the shower from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. Ask a staff member if you need any items for your shower. We have clean towels, gowns, pants and soap.
- **Changing bed linen:** Try to change your own bed linen when you need to. Ask staff if you need any linen.
- **Meals** are delivered to the unit 3 times a day:
 - Breakfast is 8:00 am
 - Lunch is 12:00 noon
 - Dinner is 5:00 pm

Your tray will have a white slip of paper with your name on it.

- **Snacks:** Juice, milk, tea and instant decaf coffee are often available in the dining room. Sandwiches may be available if you ask a staff member.
- **Medications** are given at different times during the day. Medications will be prescribed by your doctor and given to you by your nurse.

If you have any questions about your medications, talk to your nurse or pharmacist at any time.

- **Groups:** Activities are an important part of your treatment plan and we will help you slowly join groups as your treatment progress.

See the bulletin near the nursing station or ask for a group schedule for the weekly group schedule. At 3:00 pm each day the staff in the PICU run an activity group. Staff may also provide you with papers, pencils, books magazines and yoga mats/stress balls at your request.

- **Visiting hours:** Regular visiting hours from 11:00 am to 9:00 pm. There may also be times when you need to have less visiting hours based on your treatment plan. In the PICU we ask that no more than 2 visitors visit at a time.

Please talk to our in charge nurse if you have any questions.

Please use the common areas such as the dining room, or rose lounge when visiting with friends and family on the general ward.

- **No Smoking. UHN is a smoke-free environment:** Nicotine replacement is available for all patients to help manage the urge to smoke. If patients would like to join a smoking cessation program we can help make this referral.
- **Night Checks.** Between 8:00 pm and 7:00 am a staff member will check on each room with a flashlight every 30 minutes. Night checks help us to ensure your safety and track how you are sleeping. If you are awake when a staff comes by with the flashlight, wave to let us know you are awake. This helps us to accurately record your sleep.

TV, phone and Internet access

- There is a shared TV on the unit. The TV can be used from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm.
- There is a shared phone on the unit. The phone can be used from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. You can make free local calls from this phone. Staff will dial the phone for you.
- Cell phones are not allowed in the PICU. If you have a pink wrist band you may use your cell phone on the general ward. If your phone needs to be charged staff can do this for you at charging station on the general ward.

- If you have a pink band you can use the internet through your cell phone or by using the shared computer on the general ward.

The policies we explain in this booklet are meant to keep you and other patients safe. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to your treatment team.

We **may** be able to make changes if they help your treatment plan and goals.



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