Visiting the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

Welcome to our unit

We know that this is a difficult time, and we are here to help and support you.

This brochure has information about:

• the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
• members of our ICU team
• how you can help care for your loved one

We hope you find this information useful.

Kim Partridge
Nurse Manager

Please visit the UHN Patient Education website for more health information: www.uhnpatienteducation.ca

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Form: D-3293
What is the goal of the ICU?

Our goal is to work with you to provide the best possible care for your loved one. You are an important part of our team. You know your friend or relative best, and your input is important to us.

Coping with a serious illness

Your friend or relative is with us because they are seriously ill. They need help from highly skilled professionals and special modern technology. The ICU will provide both.

We know that having a seriously ill friend or family member is very stressful. We will do our best to support you as well. Try to stay hopeful and encourage your loved one to stay hopeful as well. It will take time for their body to heal.

By working together as a team, we can help you and your loved one cope with this stressful situation.

Who is part of the ICU team?

Many people will help care for your loved one. Here are the people you will meet most often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICU Nurse</th>
<th>• the nurse who will be with your loved one 24 hours a day in the ICU</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Medical Resident | • a doctor who will always be in the ICU  
| | • 3 to 4 medical residents will provide 24 hour medical care to your relative |
| Critical Care Fellows | • senior doctors doing further training in intensive care medicine. They supervise the medical residents  
| | • 2 to 3 critical care fellows work in the ICU |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| Staff Physician                           | • doctor in charge of the ICU  
• every Monday, one of our staff physicians will take charge for that week |
| Consultants                               | • other doctors who will be contacted if necessary                          |
| Nurse Manager                             | • nurse in charge of the ICU                                                |
| Patient Care Coordinator (PCC)            | • coordinates the patient care activities and the daily running of the ICU  
• helps the Nurse Manager                |
| Charge Nurse                              | • co-ordinates the activities of the unit for the shift                     |
| Patient Care Assistant (PCA)              | • helps the nurses with patient care                                        
• helps move patients to different areas of the hospital |
| Physiotherapist (PT)                      | • provides exercise programs to help bodies become stronger and keep lungs clear |
| Occupational Therapist (OT)               | • uses splints to help joints or keep hands and feet in the proper position |
| Respiratory Therapist (RT)                | • takes care of the “breathing machine” (ventilator) and will check patients’ breathing every day |
| Dietician                                 | • makes sure that patients receive the best nutrition                       |
| Speech Language Pathologist               | • may do a swallow study to check if it’s safe for patients to eat food by mouth |
| Neurosurgical Residents                   | • provide care for neurosurgical patients                                   |

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Social Worker

- can provide family counseling, help and support
- can co-ordinate family meetings and talk about discharge planning

Spiritual Care Providers

- are available if you would like their help
- do not represent any specific religion
- work with patients’ belief system to help support them during difficult times

Volunteers

- are available if you need their services
- ask the bedside nurse to contact them for you

How can I help care for my loved one?

Choosing a spokesperson

Please ask 1 person to be the main contact with the healthcare team. This person will receive updates from the team and pass the information on to family or friends.

Choosing a spokesperson reduces confusion, protects patient privacy and lets the healthcare team focus on what’s most important — caring for your loved one. Please provide us with the name and contact number for this person.

Being present at rounds

Every day, the healthcare team talks about how your loved one is doing and how to continue their care. These meetings are called rounds. If the patient gives their consent (agrees), we welcome family to attend rounds.

During rounds, you have a chance to:

- share important information with the team
- hear a quick update about your loved one’s condition
- and have a chance to ask questions
If you are the **Power of Attorney or legal decision maker** for the patient’s health related decisions, please speak to the bedside nurse or Patient Care Coordinator if you want to take part in rounds. They can guide you through the process.

Patient confidentiality (privacy) is very important to us. Help us by keeping all information about your loved one and other patients private.

**Attending family meetings**

Sometimes, we need to speak to you and other family members in more detail about your loved one’s care. In this case, we will arrange a family meeting. These meetings give you a chance to meet many of the team members and talk about your loved one’s progress. We will work with you to schedule the meeting at a convenient time for everyone.

**Helping with daily care**

Friends and family are a very important part in the care of patients. Please speak to a member of the health care team about how you can help care for your loved one.

Some examples of how you can help include:

- helping to bathe them
- combing their hair
- brushing their teeth
- helping them with leg and arm exercises
- talking with them

We can also teach you some ways to communicate with your loved one in case they are unable to talk. This is a very important and easy skill to learn.
Taking care of yourself

You are an important part of your loved one’s health care team, so you need to take care of yourself. Even though this is a stressful time, try to eat and sleep properly. Taking breaks away from the hospital is very important.

Remember: Your loved one will never be alone in the ICU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our visiting policy in the ICU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![image] We welcome visits from family and friends. Visits help the healing process of our patients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Don’t visit if you are feeling sick, have a cough or fever, have vomiting or diarrhea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Call the Critical Care Unit before entering the unit. Please use the intercoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Try to have only 2 visitors come at a time. In special cases, we may allow more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Make sure children under the age of 12 have permission to visit from the bedside nurse. They must be with an adult at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Please wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before entering and leaving the ICU and your loved one’s room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Don’t bring fresh flowers, food or latex products into the ICU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![image] Leave your valuables at home so they don’t get lost or stolen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please talk to a nurse if you have any questions about our visiting policy.
Care Pages
Care Pages is a free service you can use to communicate with family members. It’s a way to give and receive information and ask questions through the Internet. There is a computer in the waiting area for this. Please visit [www.carepages.com/visit](http://www.carepages.com/visit) for more information.

Where can I stay if I live out of town?
If you are from out of town, ask for a visitor’s package at the Volunteer Desk or the ICU Desk. This package has information about where you can stay, the Toronto Transit Maps (TTC), and other information you may find helpful.

Where can I eat?
There is a food court in the lobby of the Atrium. It is open every day from 7:00 am to 9:30 pm. Some of the food stalls are closed on holidays.

Where can I park?
There is underground parking at Toronto Western Hospital and also outdoor parking lots close to the hospital. Website: [www.uhn.ca/corporate/Directions/Pages/parking.aspx](http://www.uhn.ca/corporate/Directions/Pages/parking.aspx)

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

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