

Neuroscience Critical Care Unit (NCCU)



UHN

Information for Visitors

Welcome to our unit

On behalf of the staff in the Neuroscience Critical Care Unit (NCCU), our team would like to welcome you. We know that this is a difficult time for you, and we would like to offer our assistance and support. This booklet was written to give you information about the NCCU and the care that we provide.

We hope that you will find this information helpful.

Meg Quesnelle and the NCCU Staff

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

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University Health Network

Toronto General Hospital Toronto Western Hospital Princess Margaret Hospital

Our goal

Our goal is to give you the best possible care for your family. By working together we can make sure that our plan of care is right for your family. You are an important member of our team and your advice is important to us.

Coping with critical illness

Your relative is with us because her or his condition needs the skill of highly trained, compassionate professionals and special modern technology. Our unit will meet both of these needs. While it is your relative who is seriously ill, this experience is difficult for your entire family. We are aware of this and will do our best to support and care for both your relative and you.

Throughout the illness and recovery process you may, at times, feel that it is "one step forwards and two steps backward." It is important to try to take one day at a time, stay hopeful and try to encourage this in your relative or loved one. The body needs time to heal. By working together as a team, we can all help you and your relatives cope with this stressful situation.

Family partnership in care

Being in the hospital is a very stressful experience. As a family member, you can play an important role in the recovery of your relative. This may involve taking part in some of their care as advised by the NCCU team. We encourage you to talk to a member of the health care team and let them know you would like to take part. Some examples of how you may help are bathing, special mouth and skin care, leg and arm exercises.

We may also teach you some ways to communicate with your relative if they are unable to talk. This is a very important and easy skill to learn. We look forward to working with you to help with the recovery of your loved one.

The Neuroscience Critical Care Unit team

Many people will be involved in caring for your family. These are some of the people you will meet most often, especially the first three.

- **NCCU Nurse** - this nurse will be with your relative 24 hours a day while in the NCCU. Most of our nurses work 12 hour shifts.

- **Charge Nurse** - this nurse co-ordinates the unit shift by shift and, after the NCCU Nurse, this nurse can answer your questions and concerns.
- **Residents** - there are 3 main medical teams leading our unit: neurology, neurosurgery, and orthopedics. There is always an assigned resident from each of these teams available to provide 24 hour medical coverage for your relative. Although these residents are often not on our unit, they can be contacted for updates. Please speak to your NCCU Nurse.
- **Consultants** - these are other doctors who will be contacted to make sure the best possible care is given.
- **Dietician** - will make sure that your relative receives the best possible nutrition either by eating the right kinds of foods or by a special tube if there are swallowing problems.
- **Nurse Manager** - this nurse is in charge of the overall NCCU.
- **Patient Care Co-Ordinator (PCC)** - this nurse coordinates the day to day running of the NCCU with the Nurse Manager.
- **Patient Care Assistant (PCA)** - helps the Nurse to give care and takes patients to different tests.
- **Physiotherapist (PT)** - may be involved in providing an exercise program to maintain or improve strength in the limbs and to help keep the lungs clear.
- **Occupational Therapist (OT)** - may be involved in ordering equipment or assistive devices to help your family members with every day activities.
- **Respiratory Therapist (RT)** - may be involved if there are any breathing concerns; they will assess and monitor your relative's breathing.
- **Speech Language Pathologist** - may be asked to do a swallow study on your family member to decide if it is safe to eat food by mouth.
- **Social Worker** - can provide family counseling, help and support, coordinate family conferences and talk about discharge planning (options for leaving the hospital). See the Family Meetings section of this pamphlet.
- **Spiritual Care and Volunteers** - are available if you need their services. Please ask the bedside nurse to contact them for you.
- **Staff Physician** - this is the doctor who is in charge of the care of your family member. The Residents work closely with their Staff Physician and will speak with you most often .

Please remember:

You are a very important member of the team. You know your family member the best, so we need your help to plan the best care possible. During this stressful time you must take care of yourself. Try to eat and sleep properly. Taking time away from the hospital is very important too. Your relative will never be alone in the NCCU.

Some General Information

Visiting

Visits from family and friends are very important to the healing process of our patients.

If you are visiting a patient, we ask that you:

- Visit at anytime, except:
 1. Change of shift: 7:00AM to 8:00AM and 7:00PM to 8:00PM.
 2. On 2 NCCU, **only 2 visitors** may visit at one time between 9:00AM and 9:00PM. On 6 NCCU, **only 1 visitor** may visit at one time between 9:00AM and 9:00PM.
 3. Between 9:00PM and 7:00AM **only 1 visitor** may stay overnight to help with care. This helps the patient and others on the unit get the rest they need.
 4. Depending on the patient's condition, and of other patients, visitors may be asked to leave the room or more visitors may be allowed. This will depend on the NCCU Nurse.
 5. No cots or mattresses are allowed overnight for safety reasons. Chairs are provided.
- DO NOT visit if you are feeling sick, have a cough or fever, have vomiting or diarrhea.
- Please clean your hands before entering and after leaving the patient's room. **Everyone, including health care providers**, must wash their hands when they enter the unit, and before and after having contact with the patient.
- Please follow any isolation instructions you are given.
- Before entering 2 NCCU, **please use the intercoms provided.**
- **DO NOT use cell phones in the NCCU rooms or hallways.**

- DO NOT bring fresh flowers or latex products.
- DO NOT wear strong perfume or lotions due to allergies.
- Home cooked food for the patient is encouraged with the permission of the NCCU Nurse. For safety, please throw it away when you leave.
- Make sure children under the age of 12 have permission to visit from the NCCU Nurse. They must be with an adult at all times.
- DO NOT leave your valuables unattended and please take your loved one's belongings home if you can. UHN is not responsible for missing belongings.

Please talk to a nurse if you have any questions about our visiting guidelines.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Having a spokesperson

Please ask **one person** to be a spokesperson for your family member (this is someone who can give information to the rest of the family and friends) so that the nurse and doctor can spend more time caring for your relative. This person should be the one who telephones the NCCU for "updates" and then tells the rest of the family and friends.

Family meetings

We encourage the spokesperson to speak to the medical staff, and we will arrange family meetings in the unit as you/we feel necessary. These meetings give the full team and all family members who wish a chance to meet and talk about your relatives progress.

Care pages

This 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. A computer is available in the Waiting area for this. Please visit <http://www.carepages.com/visit> for more information.

Food Court

The Food Court is located in the lobby of the Atrium and is open everyday from 7:00AM to 9:30PM. Not all are open on holidays.

Parking

There is underground parking and outdoor parking at the Toronto Western Hospital site. Unfortunately there are no parking discounts for visitors.

Out of town visitors

If you are from out of town, you can ask for a visitor's package at the Volunteer Desk or the NCCU Desk. This package has information on accommodations, Toronto Transit Maps (TTC) and other information you may find valuable.

Contacts

If you wish to speak with a member of the team, please ask the NCCU Nurse to arrange an appropriate time and/or to provide contact information for you to follow up.

 Phone Nurse Manager, 416-603-3818

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