

Patient Information Leaflet

VISITORS GUIDE TO CORONARY CARE UNIT & STEPDOWN

Produced by the staff of the Coronary Care Unit



November 2006
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If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Quality Team, telephone 01983 534850, who will advise you.

INTRODUCTION

The **Coronary Care Unit** is a 6-bedded unit on the ground floor of the North Hospital within St Mary's hospital. It is specifically set up for the care and monitoring of patients who have chest pain that doctors suspect could be due to a heart attack or angina.

Stepdown is an adjoining 12-bedded area for ongoing care of patients with a cardiac condition.

We hope that the following information will answer some of your questions about your friend or relative's stay in CCU/Stepdown. If you have any concerns or queries about their diagnosis, treatments or investigations please ask a member of staff. A wide variety of literature and teaching aids (e.g. videos and DVDs) to help reinforce the messages and information given are available. Please ask a member of staff if you would like access to these. Patients and relatives are encouraged to seek support and/or information on an individual basis at any time, staff are always available. If there is anything you need to know, please do not hesitate to ask.

WHAT TREATMENTS DO WE OFFER?

Patients are admitted to CCU so that appropriate treatments can be given to relieve symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath or heart rhythm disturbances. During the stay on CCU the electrical activity of the heart is constantly monitored to identify any irregularity in the heart's rhythm. It can then be speedily identified and treated by whatever drug or procedure is appropriate. If necessary, this monitoring can be continued in the Stepdown area. Nursing staff will be happy to explain this to you.

For some patients it may be appropriate to use drug treatments such as clot busters e.g. Streptokinase or Tenecteplase. If given early enough after the onset of pain, this can help to limit the amount of damage done to the heart muscle.

During the first few hours following admission to CCU a series of blood tests and ECGs (measurements of the heart's electrical activity) will be done. These tests continue for a few days, all are routine and help the doctors to give the most suitable treatments and most appropriate advice.

WHERE IS THE CORONARY CARE UNIT & STEPDOWN

The Coronary Care Unit and Stepdown (CCU) are in the North Hospital, between Maternity and Children's Ward. The nearest entrance is the North Hospital entrance near the North car park and there are clear signs from here.

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES

CCU: 01983 534448
Step-Down: 01983 552142

You are welcome to telephone either ward at any time, day or night, to make enquiries about friends and relatives. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to give much information out over the telephone and would much prefer to discuss any information with you in person. If you have a large family, it would be helpful to nominate one or two family members to make calls to the ward and for these people to keep the rest of the family informed.

The Patientline system available on the ward and gives patients access to a television and telephone at their bedside. There is a charge for this service. Each patient is allocated an individual 4digit identification number. Please be considerate of others by restricting calls to daylight hours when calling the patient direct.

VISITING HOURS

2.30 p.m. – 7.30 p.m. DAILY

Only 2 visitors at the bedside at any one time please.

Please see the nurse in charge to arrange for children under the age of 14 to visit.

CCU is an acute unit and some patients will have suffered a heart attack. Rest is important to help the heart to recover and a restful atmosphere is essential for a few days. In the best interests of ALL the patients, visiting will sometimes need to be further restricted. This can happen on CCU and/or the Stepdown area. Please be considerate during these times as it is for the benefit of the patients, even though it may not be convenient to you personally. Staff will tell you as soon as the situation allows for your visit to continue. If normal visiting times are a problem for you it may be possible to make alternative arrangements with the nursing staff. Please appreciate that all patients on the ward need to rest as part of their recovery process. The doors to the unit are closed out of normal visiting hours, however there is an intercom system in use that will be answered as soon as possible by the nursing staff.

Special considerations for visiting are given to relatives of critically ill patients. Staff will discuss with you if more frequent visits are appropriate or advisable.

A STRESS FREE ENVIRONMENT

Strong emotions should be avoided during the early days of recovery. Please do not distress your friend or relative by discussing domestic or work problems.

Nightwear, towels and essential toiletries may be provided by the ward if the patient's own items cannot be brought in. As there is only limited storage space available in CCU we ask that items not required during the patient's stay are taken home. It is useful if one set of outdoor clothing could be left as this can prevent delays at discharge. Please let nursing staff know if any valuables (e.g. rings or watches) are taken home as it prevents later confusion/distress when they cannot be found.

A daily trolley service visits the ward to sell newspapers, magazines and sweets etc. Some small change will be needed if this is to be used.

A SPECIAL NOTE FOR HOLIDAY-MAKERS

Being admitted to hospital is an anxious time for everyone concerned, particularly if you are away from home. If you are worried about anything please speak to the nurses and explain your problems or concerns. The nursing staff have a great deal of experience in dealing with the problems of holidaymakers admitted here and will be happy to help and advise. If you need accommodation, we have a list of local bed and breakfast facilities. Please ask a member of staff for a copy.

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Regular visits are made by the hospital chaplain and priest if requested. Arrangements can be made for Holy Communion. Your friend or relative may prefer to see their own minister and you may arrange this at any time.

FLOWERS

Flowers really help to brighten the wards and cheer patients up but, unfortunately, lack of surfaces to display them is a problem. Please bear this in mind when friends/relatives ask about what to send or bring in. Flowers are not encouraged for patients who have had surgery due to the risk of infection.

CARDIAC REHABILITATION

We aim to direct our care not only towards the physical problems but also towards the patients' psychological well-being.

With the aim of the education packs, specific teaching and counselling, we aim to give appropriate information and support to you and your relative/friend, both during the hospital stay and beyond, relevant to their individual situation and concerns.

MOVING OUT OF CCU

When the doctors are satisfied with the patient's progress and condition, your relative/friend will be moved out of CCU to the Stepdown area where the care can be continued.

How long your friend/relative needs to stay in hospital will depend on the diagnosis. For a confirmed heart attack, a stay of 5 days is usual.

Sometimes further testing is needed in Southampton or Portsmouth hospitals, if this is the case additional information will be given.

COMMENTS

Our aim is for a quality service. If you wish to comment on the care that your relative or friend has received, please discuss the matter with a member of staff or enter the details in the Ward Comment Book. If there is any further information you need before taking your relative/friend home, please ask a member of staff.

Valuables should not be brought into the hospital. If patients have to bring in valuable items they should ask a nurse to store them safely and request a receipt for the items. You may not be able to have the valuable items returned if the time of discharge from hospital is out of hours.

We are sorry but the Trust cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items not given for safe keeping.

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues online at: <http://www.nhs.uk/>

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call the NHS 111 service on: 111

We Value Your Views On Our Service

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the Quality Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on 534850.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust
St Mary's Hospital
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 03000 61 61 61 or at enquiries@ccq.org.uk

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.

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