WHAT IS AN INTENSIVE THERAPY UNIT?

Intensive therapy units, (ITU) look after patients whose conditions are life threatening, either through serious injury or illness and need constant, close monitoring and support from equipment and medication. There are 7 beds within ITU including 2 separate cubicles/isolation rooms. Sometimes patients in ITU may have to be moved to an ITU in a different hospital. This could be because the patient needs specialist care or because beds are needed for new patients who are more seriously ill. Patients are only moved to other hospitals when it is absolutely necessary. The team of doctors on ITU makes this decision.

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER MY RELATIVE?

Within ITU one nurse will usually look after one or at most two patients. Once a patient is admitted to ITU the team of intensive care doctors and nurses will manage their care with consultation from other specialties including; general medical/surgical/orthopaedic/gynaecological doctors, physiotherapists, pharmacists and dieticians. If there is anything you don’t understand or want to understand more, please ask the staff in ITU. The staff will be happy to explain what they are doing and update you.

WHEN CAN I VISIT?

Visiting in ITU is very flexible due to it being such a difficult time for families. Visits are allowed at any reasonable time but it is advisable wherever possible to avoid prior to 11.00am. Doctors ward rounds, physiotherapy and nursing procedures are often carried out in the morning so you may be asked to leave the bedside during this time. Visitors are restricted to 2 at the bedside.

WHO CAN VISIT?

Preferably close family only, visits from other members of the family and friends will be at the discretion of the next of kin and the nursing staff. Consider who your relative would want to see whilst they are in ITU.

It is the Trusts policy that you do not bring children under the age of 11 to visit unless the patient is their parent. This can be flexible under certain circumstances, please check with the nurse in charge before you arrive.

INFECTION CONTROL

Patients who are very unwell are very susceptible to infection. Please protect our patients by washing your hands and using the anti-bacterial hand sprays before you touch the patient. Flowers are not allowed onto ITU as they can be a hazard to patients and electrical equipment.
PATIENT DIARIES

A patient diary is started on most of our patients shortly after admission. Patients may remember very little of their stay, a diary can help them to understand what happened to them and fill in any gaps in their memory. The diary is left at the patient’s bedside and nurses, doctors and relatives can make daily entries explaining the care or events that have happened that day.

FOLLOW UP

All patients discharged from ITU are seen by one of the Nursing sisters/charge Nurse or Consultant Intensivists. The follow up service is provided to check patient’s physiological stability and an opportunity for patients to ask any questions regarding their time spent in ITU. Their Diary of their time in ITU may be returned when appropriate. Patients may be discharged onto the High Dependency Unit (HDU) or to a general ward within the hospital.

TELEPHONING ITU

Relatives are welcome to ring any time to enquire about their relative’s condition. Detailed medical information will not be given over the phone due to patient confidentiality. In order to minimise the amount of time Nursing staff are away from the patient, please try and nominate one family member to ring and cascade information to other family members. A password may be established between the nurses and relatives to ensure confidentiality.

Please ring on 01246 512287 or 01246 512282 (portable telephone) The portable phone number can be used to speak directly to your relative/friend if they are able.

For further information regarding Intensive care please ask any member of staff. Also an ICU Steps booklet, is available, this is a comprehensive guide for patients and their relatives on ITU.