

## Patient information

# Leaving critical care... Going to the ward



### As you are transferred to the ward

The ward environment is very different from critical care and sometimes people find the transition difficult. You will notice that there are fewer nurses for each patient compared to critical care. This is because your condition has improved and you no longer require one to one nursing however the change can be stressful. Even if you cannot see the nurses all the time, they are still nearby and you will have a nurse call bell to use if you need any help, which will be answered as quickly as possible. This leaflet will provide you with a little additional information about the ward and your recovery. Please feel free to ask the doctors or nursing staff about anything you are unsure of.

### Going to the ward

Going to the ward is a big step on the road to recovery and going home and it is a positive move forward. It is quite normal for you and your relatives to feel worried or apprehensive, as you will all have become familiar with the staff on critical care and the routine there. The thought of meeting new people can be worrying at any time and may seem harder when you have been ill and the new people are those looking after you. The staff on the ward understand this, as they are used to looking after people who have come from critical care, so feel free to ask them about anything that concerns you.

On the ward, you will be visited by the critical care follow-up sister and one of the critical care outreach team. The outreach team liaise with the staff on critical care regarding your care and treatment and check on your general progress. They offer advice, support and training to the ward staff to ensure you receive the best possible care.

The follow-up sister will discuss your progress with you and any worries you may have. She will also be able to answer your questions regarding the time you spent on critical care. It is quite normal not to remember much about this period of time.

**When you are discharged from hospital a letter is sent to your GP informing them of the reasons for your admission, your stay in critical care and what treatment you have had.**

## **Exercise and mobility**

You may find that the slightest activity takes tremendous effort and leaves you feeling tired; this is normal and will improve in time. How long this takes will depend upon how ill you have been, your age and previous level of fitness. During your illness, you will probably have lost some weight and muscle strength and your joints may be stiff if you have been immobile for some time. The ward physiotherapist will devise an exercise programme, which will help you feel stronger over time. Sometimes, it may feel that recovery is taking a long time and it is important to be realistic about what you will be able to do for yourself. Ask the nurses, doctors and physiotherapists what you can reasonably expect to be able to do and remember they are there to help with anything you are not sure about.

## **Eating normally again**

You may find you have lost your appetite or that your sense of taste has changed and it may take some time for your eating patterns to get back to normal. Even if you don't feel hungry, do try to eat a little of what you are given. You can also order extra snacks – do ask!

## **Sleeping**

You may find that your sleeping pattern has changed and find it difficult to get to sleep or that you wake frequently. As your body recovers, you will probably find that your usual sleep pattern returns, although it may take some time. Some people find that they experience nightmares or 'flashbacks' to their time on critical care. This can be frightening, but should subside over time.

You may find it helpful to read or listen to the radio if you have trouble sleeping. Do ask staff if you would like a sleeping tablet and they can discuss this with you. The most important point to remember is that the lack of sleep will not do you any harm and, as you recover, things should get back to normal.

## Changes in mood

It may take a while to get back to feeling your normal self. Some people experience fluctuating moods, following a period of serious illness and as you reach the ward environment, the realisation of how ill you have been may dawn on you. Do not hesitate to discuss your feelings with the nursing staff or the critical care follow-up sister. The hospital chaplains are also always available to talk to you, whether you require spiritual support or not. Please ask the nurses to contact them.

### **Please feel free to contact:**

The critical care follow-up sister on 01284 712543

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

*<https://www.accessable.co.uk>*



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