

Patient information

Leaving critical care Going home



Although you have had a period of illness, going home means that you are well on the road to recovery and it is a positive move forward. It is quite normal for you to feel worried or apprehensive about being discharged home from critical care. This leaflet will provide you with a little additional information about your discharge, recovery and contact details if needed.

Medication

On discharge, pharmacy will dispense any medication(s) you need. A nurse will explain how and when to take it as well as potential side effects. If you have concerns or do not understand anything please ask the nurse before you leave or contact your GP once you have left hospital. If there is a medication you previously took and it has not been recommenced, please do not start it again without medical advice. If you took a medication before your admission and the dose has been changed, the same applies. Please seek medical advice if you have any concerns about medication.

Wound care

If you had wounds requiring dressings prior to admission please continue as before. If you have new wounds requiring treatment, your nurse will inform you of where to attend and supply the dressings that are required. If a district nurse is required, your nurse will make a referral. It is important to contact your GP if you feel the wound is becoming more painful, inflamed or appears to be swelling, as these may be signs of infection.

Follow up

When you are discharged, a letter is sent to your GP with all the details of your critical care admission. They will also be informed of any follow up requirements, further investigations or referrals to other specialties.

Exercise and mobility

You may find that the slightest activity takes tremendous effort and leaves you feeling tired. This should improve with time but depends upon how ill you have been; your age and previous level of fitness. You may have lost some weight, feel weak and your joints may be stiff if you have been immobile for some time. The physiotherapist will give advice regarding exercise to help you recover.

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 return to normal. Even if you do not feel hungry, do try to eat something nutritious each meal time. You can also try extra nourishing drinks and snacks in between.

Sleeping

You may find it difficult to get to sleep or you wake frequently. Some people experience nightmares or 'flashbacks' to their time on critical care. This can be frightening, but should subside over time. Lack of sleep will not do you any harm and as you recover, things should get back to normal. Do contact your GP if you feel it is not improving and they can discuss options with you.

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 critical illness and when you go home, the realisation of how ill you have been may dawn on you. It may help to talk to someone. Sometimes you may feel that recovery is very slow and it is important to be realistic about what you will be able to do for yourself to begin with.

If you become unwell

If your condition deteriorates and you need urgent medical attention, please go to the Emergency Department or dial 999.

For other non-urgent matters please contact your GP or NHS 111.

If you are under the care of a specialist nurse (eg colorectal, diabetic, epilepsy) and your problem relates to your condition please contact the nurse through the switch board on 01284 713000.

If you feel you need to speak to the critical care follow-up sister for advice and support, or want more information please phone 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>

