

Taking care of yourself

When someone you know is very ill, you might have any number of feelings — shock, anxiety, sadness, anger, restlessness, inability to concentrate—to name just a few. These are all expected and ‘normal’.

One of the most important things for you at this difficult time is to take care of yourself. Your health and wellness is important to your loved one and to us.

Tips for taking care of yourself:

- Eat regularly. Small healthy snacks are great if you cannot eat full meals.
- Take time to sleep. Your own health will suffer without rest. See your family doctor if you cannot sleep.
- Go for a walk or stretch. Fresh air can help clear your mind.
- Allow yourself to ask for help:
 - Have family or friends stay here while you take a few hours off, or make a visiting schedule so everyone shares the time and someone is always available.
 - Ask someone to help with cooking and making meals.
 - Choose someone to give daily updates to your extended family and friend’s. This reduces the number of calls you need to make.

What you can bring in

- Photos, cards, notes to display at the bedside
- Notebook or journal for you, your family, and friends to make notes
- Radio, music player, headphones, recorded prayers, family recordings, etc.
- Hair brush, comb, shaving supplies
- Hearing aids (with spare batteries), glasses, dentures
- Silk flowers or Mylar balloons. No fresh flowers or plants. No latex balloons. Some people are allergic to these things.
- Pets. If your family member has a much loved pet they would like to see, please talk with the patient’s nurse to arrange for a visit. Visiting pets must be up-to-dates on their shots, be clean, and kept under control at all times.

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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The Critical Care Experience

Surrey Memorial Hospital

**High Acuity Unit
Intensive Care Unit**

**Information for
Family and Visitors**

High Acuity Unit: 604-588-3315
Located on the 6th floor

Intensive Care Unit: 604-588-3306
Located on the 5th floor

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Visiting guidelines

Our visiting hours are 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, there might be times when we ask you to wait, such as for safety reasons or for patient privacy.

Some of our patients and their families prefer to have only immediate family visit while others want to see extended family and/or friends. Each person is different. Our goal is to have visiting that best suits each patient.

If you have questions or concerns about visiting, please talk with your family member's nurse. Our social worker can also help you with this.

Gowns and gloves

It is common in critical care areas for us to wear special gowns and gloves while giving care. There are different reasons why we might do this and we are happy to explain them to you.

To help prevent the spread of germs, we ask you to clean your hands before coming into the unit and again before leaving the unit. To clean your hands, either wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub.

Give us feedback

Your feedback is important to us. We want to know what we are doing well and what we can improve on. Please fill out a 'Family Satisfaction Survey'. Put it in the locked box in the waiting area.

Calling for an update

Each of our patients must have one person as the 'family contact' or spokesperson. We give detailed updates to the family contact. To protect patient confidentiality, should anyone else call us for an update, they will only be told if the patient is 'unchanged', 'stable', or 'unstable'.

For those who choose to call, it is best to call at least 1 hour or more after the change of shift. This happens at 7:00AM and 7:00PM. This gives the nurse time to get an update from the previous nurse and assess your family member.

Our waiting room

We have large waiting areas for both the High Acuity Unit and the Intensive Care Unit.

Our waiting areas are shared by many families. We ask you to be respectful and courteous to others who use the area. Keep the area clean. Respect both your family member's and other people's privacy and confidentiality.

If you have any questions or concerns about the waiting area, speak with one of our volunteers, the social worker, or the nurse-in-charge of the unit.

Communication

It is important we communicate with each other often. Please share any information you feel would be helpful to your family member's care. Please ask us questions when you need more information. Sometimes it helps to write down your questions as you think of them. That way you won't forget them when talking with us.

Usually, your family member's nurse gives you updates most often. You will also meet with the critical care doctor(s) to review the patient's condition and results of any tests or procedures.

A 'family conference' can be called by one of us or by a member of the family. This is a time to review the plan of care with the whole care team. Our social worker, our nurse-in-charge, or your family member's nurse can help arrange a family conference.

Deciding about care

When a patient is not able to take part in deciding his or her care, we turn to the Temporary Substitute Decision Maker. Our social worker can help guide you through how to appoint a Temporary Substitute Decision Maker. The social worker can also offer support and help with issues around planning for future care and support.