

Welcome to the Adult Intensive Care & Medium Care unit (ICU)

Your family member or relative has just been admitted to the ICU at the VU University Medical Centre. Our ICU consists of two intensive care locations, IC 7B or IC 7C, and a Medium Care unit, MC 7D. Patients who have a serious illness, have suffered a serious accident or who are recovering from a major operation are treated in the ICU. The patients' vital functions such as their breathing, circulation and consciousness must be intensively monitored, supported or even replaced.

Any changes in the patients' conditions are immediately detected by means of monitors, checks and observations and treatment can therefore be adjusted quickly.

The Medium Care unit serves as a step-down location for intensive care where patients continue to receive specialist care after a major operation or illness before being transferred to a regular nursing ward.



Foto W. Cornelissen

Equipment and camera monitoring

Patients in the ICU require constant monitoring. As the unit is dealing with seriously ill patients, they are very closely observed and monitored with monitoring equipment. Many of these machines will make various sounds which do not necessarily mean they signal a life threatening emergency. For example, there is a sound to indicate that a medicine pump is almost empty.

In addition to the monitoring equipment, we also use cameras to observe patients. The camera images can be viewed only on our monitoring screens and they are not recorded. Cameras can be switched off during physical care and also upon request.

Respiratory support

Many of our patients require assistance with breathing.

Patients may have an endotracheal tube inserted into their windpipe or they may receive respiratory support by means of a mask. Some patients are sedated when they receive respiratory support. A patient receiving respiratory support may not talk, because the tube is fitted between the vocal cords in the windpipe.

Sedation and confusion

Many patients are not highly alert. This may be caused by the underlying illness or condition or due to the medication we administer. Administering medication to stimulate sleep is called sedation. As the patients are seriously ill, they may easily become confused. In medical terms this is called delirium. Delirium may cause patients to remove vitally important medical equipment such as a respiratory tube or intravenous drip. In order to prevent this and to protect the patient, the ICU nurse may have to fixate ('strap') the patient's wrists to the bed.

The treatment team and other IC staff

- **ICU consultants (IC doctor)**

These are specialists in intensive care medicine. Medical treatment at the IC unit is carried out by ICU consultants and medical specialists in training to become ICU consultants (fellows). At least one of the specialists is always present on the unit in order to make any adjustments to the treatment.

- **Trainee doctors**

These are doctors who are in training for a specialism (such as anaesthesiology, surgery or internal medicine) and who are acquiring work experience in the IC unit.

- **IC and MC nurses**

These are nurses who either already have advanced training in Intensive Care or Medium Care or who are receiving training in this. The ICU nurses are responsible for providing daily nursing and care and observe bodily functions. There is always a permanent staff nurse who cares for one or more patients during his or her shift.

- **Family counsellors**

Family counsellors guide and support family members and relatives.

- **Other staff members**

Physiotherapists, nutritional assistants, administrative and service personnel.

Information about patients

We want to keep you informed about the condition of your family member or relative. We kindly ask that you nominate a first and second contact person to represent the family and/or friends. Information by telephone is only provided to these persons. If the patient's condition changes, we will contact one contact person who will then inform the rest of the family and other persons involved.

Our nurses will be able to give you the most information at the end of their shift, because they have had a longer period of caring for your family member or relative. This means that the best time for you to inquire about the condition of the patient is just before the nurses' handover. We prefer that you refrain from calling us during the handover period. The handover periods are from 7.30 - 8.15 a.m., 3.00 - 4.00 p.m. and 11.00 -11.45 p.m.

Interview with the doctor or ICU consultant

The patient's treatment at the ICU often involves several specialists. It is usually the ICU consultant who will maintain contact with the family and provide medical information.

If your family member or relative is expected to be treated at the ICU for longer than two days, you will be allocated a staff ICU consultant as a permanent medical contact person.

After liaising with you, this staff member will have regular meetings with you to inform you about the condition of your family member or relative. You can make an appointment with him/her via the nurse or family counsellors.

Visitors

Visitors are most welcome. The ICU visiting times are daily from 1.00 to 8.00 p.m. The nurses' handover is carried out at the patient's bed between 3.00 and 4.00 p.m., and we would ask you to leave the patients room during the handover. If the access doors are closed after 8.00 p.m., we ask you to ring the bell at the relevant ICU location.

When you visit the ICU, please report to one of the nurses. Please observe patients' privacy if the room screen is closed. Visits can be very demanding for the patient. We would therefore ask you to have no more than two persons visiting your family member or relative at any one time. In certain circumstances it is possible to arrange different visiting times with the nurses.

Visits by children of all ages are possible and, in many cases, even recommended. Please do liaise in advance with the nurse or family counsellor. We recommend that any initial visit by a child takes place under supervision of a nurse or family counsellor.

We ask you not to use your mobile telephone in the patient rooms. It is not permitted to make any visual and/or audio recordings of the patient or personnel without the nurse's or doctor's permission.

Digital signs

The Intensive Care unit uses digital signage. A digital sign is situated in the lift hall 7A (entrance to the 7th floor) so that visitors do not have to walk through all IC locations.

This sign helps the visitor find the correct location.

It displays only the patient surname and no other personal details. There are no other visitors en route to other wards, because the only visitors to the 7th floor are those who are visiting a relative or friend who has been admitted to an intensive care location. This ensures compliance with privacy rules.

In exceptional cases it is possible to remove a patient's name for privacy or other compelling reasons. If you feel that this is applicable, please inform the doctor or nurse.

(Hand) hygiene

Because of their illness, patients at the ICU are more susceptible to illness-causing microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, yeasts and viruses). Please therefore disinfect your hands before and after visiting your family member or relative. Disinfecting alcohol pumps are available at the ICU entrance. Flowers and plants are not permitted in the ICU due to risk of infection.

We would also ask that in the event that you are ill or are suffering from a cold you liaise with the doctor or nurse about potential visits and/or taking precautions.

Clothing and personal items

The patient needs the following items: deodorant, body spray, shaving items (if applicable), toothbrush and a comb. It is not necessary to provide soap. Patients are dressed in a hospital gown in order that care can be provided more efficiently. We recommend that valuable items are taken home, including jewellery.

Family counsellors

Due to the sometimes unexpected admission of your family member or relative to the ICU, your daily routine and that of your family members or relatives may become unsettled. There may be uncertainty, tension, anxiety and sadness. For support and/or questions that are not of a medical or nursing nature, please contact our family counsellors. They are available from Monday through Friday from 11.00 am to 7.30 p.m. They are also able to refer you to a staff member of the medical social services team or pastoral care centre. For more information and availability, we refer you to the information leaflet available in all family rooms.

Aftercare

Patients who have been at the ICU for a longer period will be visited by an IC or MC nurse from the nursing ward to check on their progress. If a patient has spent a minimum of three days in the ICU, the patient or contact person is contacted after the patient has been discharged from the VUmc hospital. At this point we ask specific health questions. We also ask for feedback on the medical and nursing care provided. We use this feedback to further improve the care on the ICU.

Follow-up meeting at the aftercare outpatient clinic

A family member or relative being admitted to the ICU is often a disturbing event. Experience shows that there may be a need for former ICU patients and their family to reflect on an often demanding admission period. A follow-up meeting can be arranged with a nurse and/or doctor to discuss experiences from the intensive care and/or medium care admission. If you would like to schedule an appointment for a follow-up meeting, please send an e-mail to the following address: nazorgpoli@vumc.nl, or you can phone during office hours on: +31 (0)20 444 3300.

Family rooms

On admission or during the stay of your family member or relative, you may be asked to wait in one of the family rooms. If a doctor or nurse wants to use this room for a meeting with another patient's family, you may be requested to temporarily vacate the room. Coffee, tea and other beverages are available from the machine opposite the family rooms.

If you are part of a large group, please make your own arrangements to resolve this by, for example, visiting at different times. Should you arrive with a large group of family or visitors and want to wait, we ask you to take a seat in the hospital's central hall.

For contact persons who live far from the hospital, it may be possible to stay at the visitor residence next to the hospital. For more information please see the relevant leaflet.

Transfer

As soon as your family member or relative has recovered, the patient, depending on the progress of the illness, will be transferred to either the Medium Care unit or the nursing ward. You will be informed of the transfer in good time, but unfortunately there are times when this is not possible or only possible at the last minute. If the patient is transferred via another hospital, the patient may return to that hospital for further treatment.

The family doctor will be informed of the hospital admission. On discharge from the ICU, an extensive report is compiled for the nursing ward and for the family doctor.

Scientific research

Scientific research is an important part of the ICU and it is directed by the REVIVE research group. Participation in medical scientific research requires permission from the patient or legal representative. For this reason we may ask your permission that your family member or relative takes part in medical scientific research. You will be notified if this should be the case. For more information we would like to refer you to our leaflet about medical scientific research at the ICU.

Registration of patient details

Just like other ICUs in the Netherlands, our ICU participates in the registration of the National Intensive Care Evaluation ([see www.stichting-nice.nl](http://www.stichting-nice.nl)). For this purpose a number of details are collected from all admitted patients with the aim to continuously record the quality of treatment and to use the details obtained to improve treatment if possible. These details are collected anonymously and are therefore not traceable by name.

Questions and/or comments

If, after reading this leaflet, you still have questions, please do not hesitate to ask the nurses in our unit. They will be happy to give you more information or arrange a meeting with the ICU consultant.

The VUmc hospital's aim is to provide optimum care. You may, however, not be satisfied with our care. We would be grateful if you would discuss your complaint or grievance with us. Please contact the ICU staff member directly involved. If this does not resolve the issue, you can request advice from the patient & care provider service centre. You will find this centre on the ground floor of the outpatient clinic building. The patient & care provider service centre can be reached on +31(0)20 444 0700 or via the e-mail address: zorgsupport@VUmc.nl.

We would appreciate it if you could let us know whether you are satisfied with our care. For this purpose a visitor's book for each ICU location is available in the family rooms. We would like you to write down your comments, experiences and/or suggestions for improvement, so that we can share this with our staff members. This input may help us to improve the service at the ICU.

Accessibility

Adult Intensive Care, location 7B and 7C

Visitor's address: De Boelelaan 1117, 1081 HV Amsterdam

Correspondence address: PO Box 7057, 1007 MB Amsterdam

IC, location 7B

Reception +31 (0)20 444 3300

Side A monitoring post: +31 (0)20 444 7513

Side B monitoring post: +31 (0)20 444 7521

IC, location 7C

Reception +31 (0)20 444 7608

Side A monitoring post: +31 (0)20 444 7613

Side B monitoring post: +31 (0)20 444 7621

MC, location 7D

Reception +31 (0)20 444 4413

Side A monitoring post: +31 (0)20 444 4410

Side B monitoring post: +31 (0)20 444 4414

If you would like to support the ICU in its scientific research and quality improvement efforts, you can make a donation to account number 4818 of Stichting VUmc Fonds.

Please remember to include 'ICV VUmc' for reference.



www.vumc.nl/fondsenwerving

Please note that the guidance and support provided by our family counsellors as well as the furnishing of the family rooms have been made possible through gifts from Stichting Gastenverblijven VUmc. In order to maintain this support, a contribution would be greatly appreciated. You can support this association financially by making a donation to account number 424003295 in the name of Stichting Gastenverblijven VUmc.

www.vumc.nl/gastenverblijf

