Welcome to the acute medical unit
A patient guide
About us

The acute medical unit (AMU) is the first point of entry for patients who are referred to hospital as emergencies by their GP or who require admission from the emergency department.

AMU is a busy environment and we receive roughly 30 to 50 admissions every day. It is not normally a long-term stay area for patients and we expect to send you home or move you to a speciality ward within 24 to 48 hours.

To maintain the highest quality of care and treatment for everyone, we involve a number of professional teams in our work, including the medical, nursing, therapies, pharmacy and administrative teams.

You'll find team boards at the main reception, which identify staff members and their positions within each team.

On admission to AMU

On admission, you will be allocated to AMU 1, 2 or 3 where you will be cared for by a particular AMU doctor and nursing team. You will be allocated a nurse who will take care of you for that shift. They will take a baseline set of observations and work through an admission kardex with you.

You will be reviewed by one of the specialist acute medical doctors who will assess and examine you to develop a plan for your care. The junior doctor working in this area will ensure that your treatment plan is reviewed on a regular basis with support from your consultant team and other professionals working on AMU.

A typical day on AMU

The consultants’ ward rounds start at 8am each morning, and you may be visited by either an AMU consultant or one of the visiting consultants from varying specialities. Consultants may visit you from respiratory medicine, gastro-enterology, cardiology or care of the elderly, depending on your plan of care.

Please be aware that these ward rounds can last until 11.30am, and you may not be seen in order of your arrival time but in order of your clinical need. We will do our best to see you as soon as possible.

Throughout the day you may also be visited by a member of one of the pharmacy or therapy teams to ensure you are receiving the right treatment to support your recovery.

Nurses’ drugs rounds are undertaken between the hours of 8am to 10am, 12pm to 2pm, 5pm to 7pm and 9pm to 11pm.
We operate protected times when undertaking drug rounds to prevent errors in dispensing medication.

Help is on hand from our healthcare assistants should you need it to wash or go to the toilet. If you require any help or do not have everything you need, please ask a member of staff and we will endeavour to help you.

**Our team uniforms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matrons</th>
<th>Assistant practitioners</th>
<th>Ward clerks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Royal blue with epaulettes</td>
<td>Patterned navy blouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters</td>
<td>Healthcare assistants</td>
<td>Physiotherapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy blue</td>
<td>Light blue uniform</td>
<td>Blue trousers and white top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff nurses</td>
<td>Housekeepers</td>
<td>Occupational therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal blue</td>
<td>Lavender uniform</td>
<td>Green trousers and white top</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meals**

Breakfast is served between 8am and 10am. Lunch is a hot or cold meal served between 12pm and 2pm. Dinner is a hot or cold meal served between 5pm and 7pm.

Meal provision is supplied by Medirest. They will take your orders in the morning for lunch and dinner. If you arrive after this time we can still provide you with a selection of hot or cold meals and snacks. Please let a member of staff know that you are hungry and we can arrange this for you. Tea and coffee are served throughout the day and water is available at each patient’s bedside.

We have protected meal times on AMU. We invite relatives to assist the nursing staff to promote nutrition, encourage you to eat and help us to keep a record of what you are eating.

Some patients admitted to AMU have been admitted with symptoms that may require them to be ‘nil-by-mouth’. This means that they will be unable to eat and drink until they are assessed by a doctor or specialist swallow nurse.

We know it can be upsetting to be without food or water, but it is required for patient safety.

**Visiting**

Visiting times are between 2pm to 4pm and 7pm to 8pm. We politely ask relatives to stick to these times and limit the number of visitors to two per patient.

We also ask that children under five are not brought to the ward as their immune systems are not as strong as ours and they are more likely to pick up and spread infections.

You may see families visiting patients at other times. This is usually because a patient is critically unwell and in those instances we are very flexible about visiting times.

**What will help your stay?**

Please only bring in non-valuable items and note that it is your responsibility to look after them. Examples include:

- any current medication or the usual prescription sheet
- clothes you may need
- slippers and shoes
- walking aids such as labelled sticks and frames
- things to read
- toiletries.
How can I get information about my care?

Friends and family

Please ask the nursing or medical team for more information. During meal times and drugs rounds we will prioritise the care of our patients. We may, therefore, take a while to answer your queries at these busy times.

Things you may see on the ward

A bed low to the floor

Sometimes this is the best way to look after someone who is very confused and at high risk of falling from their bed.

Confused patients, possibly calling out or wandering

These patients might be calling out because they are confused rather than for a specific need. Allowing patients to walk is often a good way to reduce anxiety and agitation.

Why am I in a side room with the door closed?

We nurse patients in side rooms who are both potentially infectious and who are at increased risk of picking up infections from others.

To reduce the risk of infection we keep the doors closed and ask those entering these rooms to wash their hands and to check with a nurse before going in.

Control of infection

In accordance with Department of Health regulations, all patients admitted to hospital must be screened for MRSA. Your nurse will assist you with this.

You will also be provided with a solution called Hibiscrub, with which we ask all patients to wash during their first five days in hospital. If you run out of Hibiscrub, please ask a member of staff for more.

Noise on AMU

Admissions can occur at any time on AMU and all patients require assessment on admission, so you may hear staff talking throughout the night. We try to keep this to a minimum and be as quiet as possible.

Our commitment

We aim to provide care of the highest quality, to always communicate and listen to patients, to ensure all patients are treated with dignity and respect at all times, to provide clinical care in a safe environment and in a confident manner, and to provide relevant information at the right time.

Friends and Family Test

On discharge we ask you to complete a Friends and Family Test. This is a short, tick-box form that allows you to provide feedback on your hospital experience. We can use this feedback to both praise good practice and identify areas for improvement.
The multidisciplinary team of AMU hope that your stay on the unit has met your needs and left you with a positive experience.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or audio, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.

www.uhs.nhs.uk