

The acute surgical assessment unit

Information for patients



ASU stands for acute surgical assessment unit. This is a new unit designed to offer you the best care for your individual needs, and to ensure you have the best experience possible whilst receiving your care. Our unit is made up of eight beds and one side room. This leaflet is designed to answer any questions you may have about the department and your stay here.

About your stay in ASU

You have been referred to ASU by a clinic, your GP or the emergency department because you have a condition that may require surgery.

During your stay you will be seen by a number of healthcare professionals, each with a specific role. For this reason, you may notice some duplication in the questions that you are asked. Please note, the assessment process can take several hours as we arrange for any required investigations (tests) to be done and wait for the results.

This is a teaching hospital and both medical and nursing students may be involved in your care, assessment and examination. **Please let nursing staff know if you do not wish to be reviewed by students.**

Our team

The ASU team is comprised of consultants, registrars, junior doctors, sisters, staff nurses and associate practitioners. You may also meet a nurse practitioner who works alongside the medical team and in partnership with the senior house officer. We are supported by a rotating junior medical team and medical staff from other areas of the hospital meaning you may be seen by a different specialty depending on your needs. Check the staff photo board for details of our staff and their uniforms.

The consultants are on call for 24 hours at a time, so it is likely that you will be seen by more than one consultant during your stay. Our daily team handovers will ensure continuity of your care.

What to expect

On arrival at ASU you will be seen by a member of the nursing team who will make an initial assessment of your condition, take some blood tests and if required, place a cannula into your vein. (This is a thin tube that is used to take blood. It may also be used to give fluid and drugs if necessary). You will be required to wear an identity bracelet during the whole of your hospital stay. If you don't have one, please notify the nurse in charge immediately.

Following the nursing assessment and depending on your condition, you will be seen within two hours by a doctor who will ask you more detailed questions and examine you.

Further doctors' rounds are carried out on ASU at intervals during the day. This is your opportunity to discuss your progress with your doctor or their team.

When your assessment is complete, we will tell you what we think the cause of the problem is and what the range of options for treating you are. If you need to be admitted to hospital you will go to one of our acute surgery wards. You may not need to be admitted, and it may be possible to arrange to see you in one of our daily clinics to continue investigating, advising on and treating your condition. If you have any concerns, please speak to the person providing your care, the matron or the nurse in charge.

If your next of kin would like to speak with the doctor, please make arrangements for this with the nurse in charge.

Visiting

ASU runs an 'open visiting policy' which means that family and friends are able to visit 24 hours, at the discretion of the nurse in charge. Please be aware that on all other wards visiting times are between 3pm and 8pm. You should only have two visitors at a time and we ask that they do not sit on your bed. Please consider other patients and keep noise levels to a minimum. Visitors should use the hand gel at the hospital and ward entrances to help prevent infection.

Meal times

On arrival at ASU you will be advised not to have anything further to eat and drink until you have been assessed and examined. The doctor will let you know if there are any restrictions on what you can eat and drink. If you are required to be 'nil by mouth' for any length of time you will be started on an intravenous drip to prevent dehydration. If you are diabetic, please inform your nurse immediately.

Cleaning

We are one of the country's leading NHS Trusts for infection prevention. The risk of getting an infection in one of our hospitals is extremely low. Please ask if you require information or have concerns about our daily cleaning schedule.

Your property

Please make sure your property is clearly labelled. Once you are moved to a ward, a locker is provided by your bed in which to store your belongings. Do not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. We cannot accept responsibility for any loss of valuables unless they are given to staff for safekeeping.

Your medications and pain control

If you have not brought your regular medication with you when you arrive in ASU it would be helpful if you could get someone to bring them in from home. Your doctor will need to know about any medication you normally take. They will also prescribe regular medication if you are in pain. If your pain relief is not working, talk to the person caring for you so that it can be reviewed. Please do not hesitate to ask if you are in pain – we're never too busy to help you with this.

Facilities in the hospital

There are shops on C level near the main entrance, which sell food, clothing and a wide variety of other products. Food is also available at the Spice of Life restaurant on B level, from 7.30am to 7.30pm (7pm at weekends). There is a non-charging cash machine on C level near the shops. Speak to the person caring for you if you need to book a hairdressing appointment or an interpreter.

Your spiritual care needs

Our hospitals have a spiritual care team with ministers of all faiths, to support you and your family. You can visit our chapel and prayer rooms on D level 24 hours a day. They also hold regular services. For more information ask the ward staff to contact the chaplaincy team for you or call **023 8120 8517**.

Car parking

Parking on site is limited. Disabled parking is available near the main entrance. If you need to use the car park for more than a few days, it may be worthwhile considering purchasing a long stay ticket. Long stay tickets allow unlimited parking for seven, 14 or 30 days. Please obtain an authorised long stay voucher from the ward and take it to the Travelwise office.

You may be eligible for free parking or transport to the hospital if you receive certain benefits. For more information about parking contact the Travelwise office on **023 8120 4133**, email **travelwise@uhs.nhs.uk** or visit **www.uhs.nhs/parking**.

Mobile phones

You may have your mobile phone switched on but please keep it on a silent or vibrate mode.

Leaving hospital

Your arrangements for leaving hospital will be discussed with you as soon as possible after your arrival. When you are discharged, you will be given details about medication and follow-up care. When you leave the hospital you'll be invited to give feedback about your experience via our 'Friends and Family Test' which asks you whether you would recommend our ward. The test can be found via the bedside entertainment systems or via the internet. Please ask ward staff for more details.

Contact us

We are happy to provide regular updates on your progress. Please arrange for one family member only to contact us for information to avoid too many phone calls to the ward.

ASU: **023 8120 4642**

If you have any questions about ASU that haven't been answered in this booklet, please speak to a member of staff.

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

www.uhs.nhs.uk

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