
Overnight recovery

Critical Care Unit

Information for patients and relatives



What is overnight recovery?

Patients who need an extended period of monitoring are cared for in Overnight Recovery in the first 12–24 hours after surgery. This involves a period in the Recovery Unit, located in the Operating Theatre Department, and an overnight stay in the Critical Care Unit (CCU).

What happens when a patient goes to overnight recovery?

After surgery, you will be transferred to the Recovery Unit in the Operating Theatre Department where you will be closely monitored. Care will be provided by a team of highly skilled recovery nurses and doctors, to ensure that you are stable and comfortable. You will be transferred to the Critical Care Unit by 8pm and the Critical Care team will provide care overnight. There is usually one nurse caring for two patients in the overnight recovery areas.

You will be reviewed by the Critical Care team in the morning, and if you are stable, then you will be transferred back to the ward by 8am. Occasionally your discharge will be a little later if the Critical Care team want you to be reviewed on the Critical Care ward round, if they are awaiting blood results or if they are awaiting review from your surgical team.

Where is overnight recovery?

The Recovery Unit is in the Operating Theatre Department on the lower ground floor. Please note that this is a restricted area and only authorised personnel are allowed into this area. At 8pm patients are transferred to the Critical Care Unit which is on the first floor of the Chelsea Wing.

What does overnight recovery look like?

In both the Recovery Unit and the Critical Care Unit, there is a large amount of equipment around the bedside. This is necessary to monitor your condition.

It is not possible to have separate male and female areas, however, we will maintain your privacy and dignity as much as possible. People respond differently following surgery and it is not uncommon for patients to be forgetful, sleepy or a little confused. This is often due to the medications and anaesthetic they have received during and after the operation.

Visiting in overnight recovery

The period immediately after surgery is spent in the Recovery Unit which is part of the Operating Theatre Department.

Visiting is limited in the Recovery Unit to ensure that privacy, dignity and safety is maintained for all patients. A friend or relative can telephone the Recovery Unit throughout the day to ask after you if you wish. However, we suggest that only one person telephones the unit and passes on the information to the rest of your family and friends. This enables the nurse looking after you to spend as much time as possible caring for you.

Visiting hours in the Recovery Unit are restricted to between 6pm and 7.30pm. Visiting in the Recovery Unit is restricted to one visitor per patient and is at the discretion of the nurse in charge. We ask that your friend or relative telephone the Recovery Unit before visiting. When they arrive, they will need to use the intercom or the telephone at the entrance to Theatres to call extension 8345 and wait for a member of staff to escort them into the department. All visitors should remove outdoor jackets, use the hand gel on entering the unit and put on a plastic apron at the bedside. We also ask that they remove the apron when leaving the bedside and use the hand gel on the way out of the unit.

Visiting is flexible after a patient is moved to CCU and is at the discretion of the nurse in charge.

Your friends or relatives are welcome to telephone the unit on the numbers below to ask after you at any point through the night.

Contact Details

Recovery:

020 7811 8345 / 020 7811 8282
(8am – 8pm, day of surgery)

Critical Care Unit:

020 7808 2040 / 020 7811 8143
(8pm – 8am, night of surgery)

References

This leaflet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available.

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Telephone: Chelsea 020 7811 8438 / 020 7808 2083

Sutton 020 8661 3759 / 3951

Email: patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this leaflet.

Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.

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