

**Welcome to Quinte Health
Belleville General Hospital ICU**

**Patient and Family
Handbook**

**What you need to know when your loved one
is a patient in the Intensive Care Unit**

ICU Phone Number (613) 969-7400 ext. 2429



Quinte Health

Belleville General Hospital Intensive Care Unit

Welcome to the ICU

The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Quinte Health provides care for patients in our 21-bed, state-of-the-art unit located on the first floor of Belleville General Hospital. Our ICU is medical-surgical and provides critical care services to patients 16 years of age and older.



Patient and Family-Centred Care

There are many different members of the health care team who work together to provide patient-centred care. You, as a family member of the patient, are an important part of the team. Regular communication will take place with you regarding patient condition and treatment options. Please feel free to ask any member of the health care team if you have questions or concerns and we will be happy to assist you with finding the answers.



How will we keep you informed?

We encourage the family to appoint a spokesperson with whom the ICU team will communicate. That person can then share information with the rest of the family.

The physician's schedule can vary depending on what is happening in the ICU and, therefore, the physician will not always be available to speak with you. The nurse will have the most current information about your loved one's condition and will let your spokesperson know if there are any significant changes.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Release of Information

Every patient identifies a Next of Kin (NOK) when they register at Quinte Health. The NOK is a primary contact and spokesperson for the family. Please ensure that we have the correct contact information for the NOK. The Privacy Act of Ontario prevents us from providing patient information over the telephone unless they are the NOK, or the NOK or patient has given permission.

Privacy

Please respect the privacy of other patients and families. We ask that you do not look into other patient rooms, at monitors, or at other patient information while you are visiting your loved one in the ICU.



Taking pictures or videos of patients or staff is not permitted unless express permission from the individual is given. Cell phones are discouraged in the main ICU areas. There is an ICU family waiting room where you will have more privacy for phone calls.

Quinte Health is a place of mutual respect. Aggressive, disrespectful or threatening behavior towards staff will not be tolerated.

Intensive Care Unit Health Care Team

Your ICU health care team includes:

Intensivist: A doctor who diagnoses ICU patients and directs their care and treatment. These physicians have specialized training in treating critically ill patients.

ICU Nurse: RNs with special education and training to provide care to critically ill patients. ICU nurses collaborate with the physician and other team members to implement the plan of care. Your ICU nurse will continually assess, monitor, provide nursing care, and communicate with you about ongoing care needs.

Patient Care Lead/Charge Nurse: An ICU nurse with extensive experience in the ICU who, in collaboration with the team, facilitates patient admissions and transfers in ICU, coordinates staffing assignments and communicates with the health care team.

Respiratory Therapist: The RT helps to manage the patient's airway and ventilation needs. This may include applying oxygen, suctioning, and managing ventilator settings for those patients who are not breathing on their own.

Social Worker: Provides emotional, psychological, and social support, and counselling, to patients and families, connects them to community resources and facilitates communication with the ICU team.

Intensive Care Unit Health Care Team

Pharmacist/Pharmacy Tech: A pharmacist and technician will review ordered medications, obtain a complete medication history and monitor current medications for any drug interactions. The pharmacist will make recommendations for specific drugs and dosages in collaboration with the health care team.

Physiotherapist: Assesses mobility and helps the patient maintain and restore physical strength and function while in the ICU. The physiotherapist will provide specific exercises or treatments, like chest physiotherapy, to help improve the patient's breathing.



Spiritual Care Team: Spiritual Care Practitioners, often identified as Chaplains, are part of the health care team and provide spiritual and grief support services to Quinte Health patients and families, upon request.

Unit Communications Clerk (UCC): Answers the telephone, transcribes physician orders, assists the health care team with organizing patient transport for tests, appointments, discharges and transfers.

Hospitality Services Representative (HSR): Cleans and stocks patient rooms and common areas of ICU.

Personal Support Worker (PSW): PSWs provide care and support with Activities of Daily Living to ICU patients. Your PSW ensures that patients are comfortable, safe, and enjoy physical and emotional well-being.

Visiting Patients in the ICU

You will be notified as soon as possible when your loved one is admitted to the ICU. When your family member is received to the ICU, the staff will need some time to get them settled and complete the admission assessment. Please use the intercom located at the main entrance of the ICU to alert staff that you are waiting to see your loved one.



Please await direction from staff to ensure that the dignity and privacy of all our ICU patients is protected. You may have to remain in the waiting room for a period of time.

When you are directed to come in, please speak to the nurse caring for your loved one and ask for instructions before entering the patient's room.

The care team will ask you questions about the patient, including how they were functioning at home prior to coming to the hospital. A list of current home medications may be reviewed with you if the patient is unable to do so.

Visiting Patients in ICU

NOTE: Visiting hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and the number of visitors may be restricted. Typically, no more than 2 visitors are permitted at any one time. Please visit the Quinte Health website for more information on current visiting restrictions.

Visitors should be aged 16+ (unless exceptional circumstances e.g. parent is a patient). Visitors under 16 must always have a responsible adult with them.

There may be certain times that your visit is delayed or shortened, depending on the patient's condition, when care is being provided, or based on patient wishes.

During shift change from 7:00 to 9:00 morning and night, the ICU staff are communicating important information and may not be able to answer the phone or allow visitors. The oncoming nurse may ask you to wait in the waiting room while they assess and provide care. It can take the oncoming nurse up to an hour to assess and provide morning or evening care to your loved one. If you need to make special arrangements for communication times, please speak to your nurse.

Rest assured that the team will let you know if there is a sudden change or deterioration in your loved one's condition.

The waiting room is located across from the entrance of the ICU. Please feel free to use this space to relax as needed. Please be respectful of other visitors and families as this is a shared space.

Infection Control

Hand washing is the most important defense in preventing infection.



Please be sure to clean your hands frequently while in the ICU, before entering the patient room, and when leaving the patient room. Hand sanitizer is located at the entrance to the ICU and outside of each patient room.

Use soap and water after using the bathroom or when hands are visibly soiled. You should observe the staff cleansing their hands regularly with hand sanitizer and soap and water as needed.



You may be asked to wear a gown, mask, visor and gloves when visiting your loved one if they have been identified as needing contact or droplet isolation. Please speak to your nurse for more information on these requirements before entering the patient room.

Monitors and Alarms

All patients in the ICU are continuously monitored. There are bedside monitors in the patient room that display the patient's blood pressure, heart rate and rhythm, respiratory rate and oxygen level.



The same monitoring information is displayed on monitors located outside the patient room. This allows the nursing staff to monitor their patients when they are away from the patient room, getting medications, or charting.

Alarms may sound, but are not always cause for concern. Your ICU nurse will be happy to explain the monitor and alarms to you, so please ask if you would like more information.

A BiPAP or CPAP mask is a minimally invasive form of life support that uses pressure to deliver oxygen to the patient and relieve their work of breathing.

Optiflow is another method of oxygen delivery through nasal prongs. A patient with non-invasive ventilation support can breathe on their own, but needs support to maintain their oxygen at an optimal level.

The patient may take short breaks from the face mask as their condition begins to improve. Please speak to the nurse before removing an oxygen mask from the patient.

Mechanical Ventilation is an invasive form of life support needed when the patient cannot breathe on their own.

The patient is intubated with a breathing tube placed in their airway and connected to the ventilator, which delivers oxygen to the patient.

Adjustments are made to the ventilator settings, as needed, to support optimal lung functioning.



What to Expect in the Patient Room

Your loved one may be on various medications to relieve pain, provide sedation or support their blood pressure and heart rate. These may include:

Sedation: Medications given to provide rest and amnesia to patients when they are intubated and on a ventilator. Sedation medications will be weaned gradually as the patient's condition improves.

Analgesics: Medications given to treat pain. Pain is assessed by the nurse regularly throughout the shift and medications will be administered to keep the patient comfortable.

Blood Pressure/Heart Rate: Medications that control blood pressure and help the heart beat more effectively.

Nutrition and Feeding: It is important to provide nutrition for patients who cannot eat. The liquid formula has specific nutrients and electrolytes and is given through a feeding tube inserted into the patient's stomach, through the nose, mouth or abdomen. When a patient's digestive tract is not functioning well, replacement of nutrients can be given intravenously (IV).



What can you do to help?

The ICU can be a confusing, disorienting experience for patients who are very ill and often do not know what day or time it is. As a member of the health care team for your loved one, there are several things you can do to assist.

Being present and talking in a low, calming voice to your loved one will provide comfort. You may touch them, hold their hand. If needed, gently remind them of the date and time of day. Even if your loved one is sedated and on a ventilator, they may be able to hear your voice. You may bring in their favorite music, newspapers, magazines or books. You can read to your loved one. You can moisten their lips/mouth with a mouth swab. Your nurse will be happy to involve you in patient care as able and within your comfort level.



Please do not eat or drink in the patient's room. Please ask the nurse before giving food or drinks to the patient. Some patients are on fluid restriction or are unable to swallow safely.

Personal Belongings

When possible, we ask that you take home your loved one's personal belongings. Money and other valuables should be sent home with the Next of Kin. Quinte Health and its staff are not responsible for lost items.

After providing a current medication list, medications should be taken home. There may be times you will be asked to provide some medications that are not accessible from the hospital pharmacy.

The nursing staff will advise you on what toiletries and personal belongings the patient may require during their stay.

Quinte Health has a no scent policy.

Please do not wear perfumes and colognes when visiting your loved one. Other patients and staff members may be allergic and have serious reactions to scented products. Flowers can have a strong scent so please keep this in mind and try to choose less fragrant flowers, should you choose to bring flowers.



The Plan of Care: Making Health Care Decisions

The health care team will discuss the care plan with the patient and/or family. The care plan should reflect any current or previously expressed wishes of the patient, taking into account the medical facts provided by the team.

If the patient is unable to make their own health care decisions, a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) is appointed based on guidance from the Health Care Consent Act, which provides a list of individuals who automatically become the SDM. This list includes Power of Attorney (POA) for personal care *if this was previously documented by the patient*. The health care team is legally obligated to follow the Health Care Consent Act. Note that the listed Next of Kin may or may not be the SDM depending on their relation to the patient.

Any documentation that outlines the patient's wishes, Power of Attorney or Do Not Resuscitate (DNR), should be brought in to be reviewed with the health care team.

We understand that making decisions about treatment when someone is critically ill is very difficult. In some cases, families have not had the opportunity to discuss treatment wishes with their loved one prior to their ICU stay. Please notify staff if you and your family are struggling so we can support you through this process.



Discharge or Transfer from ICU

As patients recover from their critical illness and their condition stabilizes, they will be transferred out of the ICU to another inpatient unit. It is rare for patients to be discharged directly home from ICU.



It is normal for patients and families to feel anxious at times of transition. The ICU team will provide a comprehensive report to the team receiving the patient. As well, for at least 48 hours after transfer to another unit, our Critical Care Response

Team (CCRT) will follow the patient to ensure continuity of care.

When a patient is transferred out of ICU, a Patient Flow Coordinator (PFC) will work with the patient and family to complete a safe and appropriate discharge plan. The patient will be assessed by medical and allied health professionals to determine what supports will be required in the community to transition home safely.

There are times when the patient's medical needs exceed the resources and services available at Quinte Health. In this case, arrangements will be made to transfer the patient to a different hospital. You will be notified if such a transfer is required for your loved one.

Caring for Yourself

When your loved one is ill, it is easy to forget about your own care needs. Remember to take breaks, and to eat and drink regularly. Your loved one needs you to take care of yourself in order to provide support and to help make important care decisions during their stay in ICU.

It can be difficult to remain positive and realistic. The ICU journey can include many improvements and setbacks along the way. The ICU Social Worker can provide emotional support and help guide you through this process and discuss what to expect following the ICU.

Please talk to any member of the health care team if you need support. We are here to help you, too!



Quinte Health also offers Spiritual Care to patients and families as needed. A chaplain is available 24/7 if needed. Please ask a staff member to connect you.

Quinte Health
Belleville General Hospital
265 Dundas Street East
Belleville Ontario
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To assist you with immediate questions or concerns,
please call:

ICU Patient Care Leads
Amie and Emma (Day
Time) or Colleen and
Angie (Night Time)
(613) 969-7400 ext. 2429

ICU Manager Shelley
(613) 969-7400 ext. 2609

ICU Social Worker
Meghan
(613) 969-7400 x 2629

OR

Patient Feedback/Experience
Please call to provide feedback or to discuss any
concerns you have
(613) 969-7400 x2033