Ward 3F
Medical High Dependency Unit
Information for relatives and friends

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About the unit

The Medical High Dependency Unit cares for patients who need close observation by specially trained nursing and medical staff.

People are admitted to the unit for a variety of reasons. It may be that their condition has worsened on the ward or they have been admitted with a sudden acute illness, such as breathing or heart problems.

Sudden, serious illnesses can happen at any time and most people are unprepared to cope with them. Our aim in this unit is not just to care for the patient, but to care for you - the patient’s relatives and friends.

We appreciate that you may be anxious and afraid at this time. This leaflet may contain some information that will be useful and helpful at this, often difficult time.

The unit staff

The senior Charge Nurse of the unit is Gail Stark. The unit has approximately 30 trained nursing staff. They are experienced in all aspects of caring for patients with severe illness. Sometimes trainees are in the unit who are supervised by the trained staff.
at all times. Patients are allocated to a nurse on shift by shift basis to ensure that they are cared for by a nurse with the appropriate skills to manage patients with a particular condition. The nurse caring for your relative/friend can keep you up to date with their condition.

Please feel free to ask us questions if you wish. We will try to be open and honest with you about your relative’s condition but we will always put our patients’ wishes first, where appropriate.

The unit

Purpose
A High Dependency Unit can be a frightening, noisy and intimidating place. Seeing your friend or loved one in these surroundings can be difficult. We will do all we can to support you. The unit is designed to care for very sick patients, but on occasion, due to bed availability, patients may stay longer than their condition requires. Please be reassured the nursing staff will keep you informed.

Layout
The unit has 12 beds and accommodates both male and female patients. There are two-four bedded areas and four single side rooms.
Unfortunately, there are occasions when male and female patients are nursed in the same room. This is avoided where possible. The number of patients in the unit varies from day-to-day.

**Equipment**

The amount of equipment attached to and surrounding your relative may appear daunting at first. If you wish, the staff will explain its uses to you. The majority of our patients will be connected to heart monitors and drip machines and some may be attached to specialised machinery which will help them with their breathing. Please do not hesitate to ask staff if you are unsure about any equipment used in your relative’s care.

**Nursing philosophy**

**Nursing philosophy - Medical HDU**

- All patients are individuals and we will respect their personal, cultural and spiritual beliefs.
- Staff will maintain each patient’s dignity at all times.
- All patients can expect an equally high standard of care appropriate to their individual needs, with ongoing assessment and monitoring using the best available resources.
• In the patient’s dependent state, the named nurse can become an advocate. The nurses’ role is to anticipate and manage problems on behalf of their patients and communicate closely with the family.

• Effective communication with support, empathy and sensitivity towards patients, their companions and also other staff is crucial. Information is passed on to relatives to both inform and support their understanding of the patient’s condition. We encourage family involvement with patient care, where this is possible.

• The ultimate aim is always to strive towards providing quality of life for both patients and relatives/friends. Although a patient may be highly dependent, sometimes for a long period, the nurses’ aim is for the patient to return to their previous optimum level of independence.

• Sadly, recovery is not always possible, in which case the aim is for a peaceful and dignified death, providing support for relatives/friends at this time.

• The unit benefits from a variety of professional and technical expertise from a range of disciplines working as a team. The healthcare team is constantly looking to the future with a view to improving our knowledge using the best available evidence.

• We are continually trying to improve standards to provide person centred, evidence based care.
Named nursing

On admission to the unit, each patient will be assigned a named nurse who has the relevant skills and knowledge to care for that patient in their highly dependent state.

Due to the changing dependency of our patients within MHDU (Medical High Dependency Unit), named nurses change on a shift basis. Where possible, the same nurse will be responsible for the same patient during their shifts to ensure continuity of care.

The Senior Charge Nurse Gail Stark gives advice, ongoing support and professional guidance in all aspects of nursing care to all named nurses.

Should you have any questions or concerns about your relative’s care, you should direct any questions to the named nurse in the first instance.

Medical staff

Our high dependency unit aims to deliver high quality, evidence-based care to patients, in a person-centred, safe and effective manner.

When you first arrive in the unit you will be seen by a middle grade doctor to ensure you are getting the correct treatment, and also to assess if this is
working. Following this a consultant will see you, and then a middle grade doctor will see you daily until you are better under consultant supervision.

You should feel that your diagnosis is explained to you, if you do not feel this has been done, please ask a member of our staff.

A pharmacist will visit you to speak to you about your existing medicines, do not be alarmed if we stop some temporarily as they can interfere with your care when unwell. You may also be visited by a range of other people including physiotherapists to help you get better.

When you are better, we will move you to a general medical ward. This should happen in the daytime to let the new team meet you. Sometimes this happens at night, when unwell patients need to come to the unit to replace patients who have got better, we are sorry if this occurs at night.

It is routine now for us to speak to you about your wishes with regard to treatment. Please do not be alarmed by this, it is important for us to understand what your thoughts are about certain aspects of your treatment, and it is our goal to help you make informed decisions about your care.
Paramedical staff

As well as the experienced nursing and medical staff responsible for your relative’s care, they will also receive the services of all disciplines of our paramedical staff. Their aim is to ensure your relative receives the best possible care during the acute and recovery phase of their illness.

These include:

- Physiotherapists, pharmacists and dietitians
- Specialist nurses - highly skilled in certain conditions - for example, Diabetes

Visiting

We have flexible visiting 2pm – 8pm.

Anyone wishing to visit at other times should speak to the patient’s named nurse.

Visiting arrangements may be changed dependent on the patient’s condition and need for care.

We suggest that only close family and friends should visit at first. We are happy to allow other friends to visit in due course, if the patient wishes this. We welcome families, including children, and believe they make a powerful and positive impact to the unit.
We would respectfully ask, however, that children are kept under control while in the unit, both for their own safety and for the comfort and safety of others.

Please note: There is a range of facilities for visitors including a drinks machine, seating, payphone and overnight room where appropriate.

Visitors should ring the doorbell and wait for a member of staff before entering the unit. Visitors are restricted to two for each patient in the four-bedded areas due to lack of space.

**Telephoning**

The **direct** line to the Medical High Dependency is **01563 827936**.

Unless otherwise advised by the patient or you, we will only give out limited information to members of the immediate family over the telephone. This is to protect the patient’s right to confidentiality and to avoid confusion.

Please feel free to call at any time but we would ask that one member of the family is chosen to call on behalf of the rest of the family. This allows nursing staff more time to carry out patient care.
Gifts and flowers

We respectfully ask that you do not bring flowers into this environment. Staff must be informed of any food or drink brought into the unit as many of our patients are not allowed or not able to consume certain items because of their condition or treatment.

Personal belongings are encouraged but due to limited space for storage, we ask that you only bring in enough belongings for a short stay.

Useful items include: toiletries, nightwear and slippers.

Religious support

Hospital chaplains and ministers of all faiths are available to support you and visit your relative. Please let us know if you or your relative would like to see them. The chapel is on the ground floor near the Dining Room and is available for prayer or quiet moments of reflection. The dates and times of the services are displayed in the chapel.
Social support

Social workers are available within the hospital should you require any help or advice. If you require a medical certificate for your relative, the nursing staff can provide this. Please let us know if you need any additional help.

Useful information

Dining room opening hours

• Breakfast  8am - 11am
• Lunch   12noon - 2pm
• Dinner   5pm - 7pm

Snacks and sandwiches are available outside these times.

The Volunteers’ shop and servery are located next to front door.

Open seven days a week

• Monday - Friday  9.30am - 8pm
• Weekends   2pm - 8pm
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this form and return it to: Communications Department, 28 Lister Street, University Hospital
Crosshouse, Crosshouse KA2 0BB. You can also email us at: comms@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk.
If you provide your contact details, we will acknowledge your comments and pass them
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