

Welcome to the Brain Injury Unit

Neurology Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

The Brain Injury Unit (BIU) is a ward for people who need help after a brain injury. It has 9 beds for patients who need neurorehabilitation. This is Leicestershire's only NHS funded rehabilitation (Level 1 Specialist Rehabilitation unit for East Midlands). It is on the ground floor of Leicester General Hospital. This leaflet gives information about the unit to friends and family of our patients.

A brain injury could have been caused by:

- a trauma, such as a fall or car accident
- lack of oxygen in the brain such as during a heart attack (cardiac arrest)
- a growth within the brain, like a tumour

Patients may have had brain surgery before coming to this ward. Some may need to breathe through a tube in their neck (tracheostomy). Some may be confused or behave differently to usual.

Patients come to the BIU after being diagnosed with a brain injury. They usually come from

- the Emergency Department,
- an intensive care unit,
- trauma centres from across the country.

Once on the unit, a nurse and other members of the team will assess your relative/ friend.

Family and friends can give us useful information about the patient's character, choices, preferences and home life. We will update you through regular meetings.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Who will be caring for my relative?

The Brain Injury Unit team is made up of a number of different groups:

Doctors:

The consultant is in charge of the patient's care. They check their progress and look after the medical needs. If needed, they will ask other specialists for help (such as eye or joint specialists).

Qualified nurses and health care assistants:

Nurses and health care assistants (HCA) are present day and night. They look after patient's personal care, food and drinks and moving in bed (mobility). They also check important signs like blood pressure or heart rate to spot problems early.

They work with other staff like physiotherapists or specialist nurses (for example, diabetic specialist nurses) to offer the best possible care.

Physiotherapists:

During the first days of admission to BIU, physiotherapists will look at how body strength and movement has changed. The physiotherapist make a personal treatment plan. It may include:

- help with breathing and clearing phlegm, including tracheostomy care
- checking muscle length and strength
- checking movement patterns
- checking posture

Please ask the physiotherapist how you can be involved.

Occupational Therapists (OTs):

OTs use activities (or occupations) to check and improve skills needed for daily life. They can help with:

- skills needed to carry out everyday tasks such as washing, dressing, cooking, and housework.
- Check responses for touch and sound for patients who appear to be in a Prolonged Disorder of Consciousness (PDOC). PDOC is a state of reduced consciousness that can affect people after a serious brain injury. They are different from a coma, which is a complete loss of consciousness lasting over 6 hours
- Check and improve skills thinking skills such as processing information from our senses, memory and problem solving skills through activities.
- Provide special equipment such as wheelchairs and aids to help with moving to and from beds, chairs and toilets.

Speech and Language Therapists:

Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) check and manage:

- **Communication:** how patients speak or use other ways to express their needs and wishes. This can be verbally or non-verbally. They will also look at how they understand spoken and written language.
- **Swallowing:** SLT's may suggest certain strategies or food textures to make eating and drinking safer and more enjoyable. They also help with tracheostomy care when needed.

SLT's also check responses to touch and sound for patients who seem to be unconscious (PDOC).

They may offer therapy for swallowing if right for the patient.

Do not give food or drink to a patient without asking a nurse or SLT.

Dieticians:

Dieticians check on nutrition. They advise on the best feeding plans or supplements. After a brain injury, energy and protein often change. Sometimes we may need to change the texture of food and drinks to make them safer to swallow.

If a patient is not eating/ drinking enough, they might need special drinks or a feeding through a tube.

Neuropsychologists:

The team works help understand how a brain injury affects someone's mood, behaviour and thinking skills. Sometimes we may need to do tests to check someone's thinking skills, memory difficulties or problem solving. Not everyone will need this. It depends on their needs.

Other professionals on the ward:

Many other professionals are involved in caring for patients on our unit. This includes phlebotomists who take blood samples for testing, pharmacist, ward clerks, domestic assistant, podiatrists that help manage your foot health, social workers to support and advise on topics involving discharge and volunteers and porters.

Leicester's Hospitals are a teaching NHS trust. Students may be present on the ward and involved as part of the team.

What to bring to hospital

Patients should wear their own clothes. As many patients have trouble moving their arms and legs, we recommend loose clothing like **t-shirts, shorts or jogging bottoms**.

Shoes should have a good grip, such as **trainers**. They lower the risk of falls and can be used in therapy. Slippers can be worn but should be well-fitted and have a full back.

Patients need **toiletries** such as shower gel, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, deodorant, skin cream, shavers/ shaving gel.

Mealtimes

Ward meal times are:

- Breakfast: **8am to 9am**
- Lunch: **12.30pm to 1.30pm**
- Dinner: **5pm to 6pm**

Family and friends can help with meals with support from the Nurses and Speech and Language Team. People who have a brain injury may not be able to eat normal food or to drink as they used to, due to trouble with swallowing. **Please speak to a nurse before you give any food or drink to a patient.**

You can bring a snack for patients.

Please note we **cannot** reheat food on the unit. Please store food in the original packaging or in a clean closed tub that we can keep in the fridge.

Visiting times

There may be visiting restrictions in place at certain times (for example, during a pandemic) please check with ward staff first. The hospital's visiting policy is constantly reviewed. If there are any changes to this we will let you know.

If there are no restrictions, ward visiting hours are 2pm to 7pm. If you are not able to visit during these times, please speak with the nurse in charge.

Only 2 visitors are allowed at any one time (this may be less if restrictions are in place), to keep a safe environment on the unit.

Planning for discharge

After a few days on the unit we invite patient's family members to a meeting. In this meeting, different professionals will give an overview of their work, goals and their vision of future steps.

After a stay on the BIU, the team can recommend discharge to either of following options:

- the Neurological Rehabilitation Unit (Leicester General Hospital).
- a community hospital.
- a specialist rehabilitation centre outside the trust.
- a specialist nursing home.
- home.

We will often need the support of social workers and/or a specialist discharge sister to help us to plan and prepare for discharge.



Contact details

We can be contacted at anytime by phone on **0116 258 4628** or **0116 258 4629**.

We can only give some information over the phone to keep patient confidentiality. If you or your family would like to have more information over the phone, you can set up a password with the nursing staff.

You can speak to a doctor or therapist Monday to Friday, from 11am to 4pm. If you would like to speak to the consultant for the ward, please speak to staff or call the secretary on **0116 258 4576**.

If you would like to speak to the Ward Leader or the Matron please ask the nurse in charge or the ward clerk.

Patient and family feedback forms can be found at the ward entrance and there is a mailbox to send them.



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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