

Welcome to the Brain Injury Unit

Neurology Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

The Brain Injury Unit (BIU) is a neurology ward with 9 beds for people who have had a recent injury to their brain. This is Leicestershire's only NHS Brain Injury Unit and it is located 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 e.g. tumour.

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

Patients are admitted to BIU when diagnosed with an injury to their brain, and usually come from the Emergency Department, an intensive care unit or 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 provide valuable information about the patient's character, choices, preferences and home conditions, as well as work with staff to make patients more comfortable and stimulated. We aim to keep you informed of your relative/ friend's daily progress, and also 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.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Who will be caring for my relative?

The Brain Injury Unit Team has experienced nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, neuropsychologists, speech and language therapists, health care/rehabilitation assistants, together with dietitians, podiatrists, social workers and volunteers.

Doctors:

The consultant and a junior doctor will manage the medical treatment, including medications, examinations and tests, such as blood or urine tests.

If needed, they will contact other medical specialities (e.g. eye specialists 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 (nutrition), toileting needs (bladder and bowel function) and mobility (moving in bed and getting in and out of it). They also check important signs like blood pressure or heart rate to make sure best treatment is being given and that early problems can be identified.

The ward nurses and HCAs work with other professionals like physiotherapists or specialist nurses (e.g. diabetic specialist nurses) to provide the best possible care.

Physiotherapists:

During the first days of admission to BIU, physiotherapists will look at how body strength and movement has changed after the brain injury. The physiotherapist will create an individual plan of treatment that may include:

- support with breathing and phlegm clearance, including tracheostomy management.
- assessment of muscle groups length and strength.
- assessment of movement patterns.
- assessment of postural ability.

Please ask the physiotherapist how you can be involved.

Occupational Therapists:

The occupational therapist (OT) will provide:

- help to develop independence in carrying out everyday tasks such as dressing, cooking, and housework.
- help to improve skills like perception, thinking and solving problems.
- special equipment such as wheelchairs and aids to help with moving to and from beds, chairs and toilets.
- minor adaptations around the home to support discharge, such as grab rails.

Speech and Language Therapists:

Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) are involved in assessment and management of:

- **communication** - verbal communication, understanding what is said, reading or writing and social communication skills.
- **eating and drinking** - the SLT will recommend specific consistencies to help reduce the risk of choking and food and drink going onto the lungs (aspiration).

Therapy for swallowing may be provided if appropriate.

It is very important not to feed a patient without seeking the advice of a nurse or SLT.

Dieticians:

Dietitians advise patients, families and medical teams on making sure a patient eats what they need. After a brain injury a person's needs for nutrition (i.e. energy and protein) can often change. In some cases it may be necessary 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 to be given special drinks or a feeding tube.

Neuropsychologists:

A neuropsychologist specialises in looking at how a brain injury has affected memory, thinking skills, behaviour and emotions. They will talk to the patient and may also talk to family and staff. Sometimes they use questionnaires or tests to check a patient's memory. The aim is to help patients understand and deal with the effects of a brain injury for the best recovery possible.

Not everyone will need to see the neuropsychologist, but the doctor will refer anyone that needs it.

Other professionals on the ward:

Many other professionals are involved in caring for patients on our unit including phlebotomists who take blood samples for testing, pharmacist, ward clerks, domestic assistant, and porters.

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

What to bring to hospital

We encourage patients to 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**.

It is important to wear shoes with a good grip, such as **trainers** (they reduce 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 usually 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 who would like to help patients with meals are welcome to do so. 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, but 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 (e.g. during a pandemic) so please check with ward staff first. The hospital's visiting policy is constantly reviewed and if there are any changes to this we will let you know.

If there are no restrictions, ward visiting hours are 11am to 7pm, although we do ask for a rest period for patients between 2pm to 4pm. If you are unable 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), in order to maintain 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:

- 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 receive 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 7pm. 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 Sister 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 بلغة 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

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk