

# **Richmond Acute Medicine Unit (AMU)**

**A guide for patients and carers**

**Welcome to Richmond Acute Medicine Unit. This booklet aims to offer information on what to expect from your stay. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

Richmond Acute Medical Unit is also called the Acute Medicine Unit or, in short, AMU.

Patients are admitted to the AMU from the emergency department or AAA (Ambulatory Assessment Area) for investigations and treatment.

## **When you arrive on the ward**

On arrival at the ward, you will be welcomed by the nurse in charge of your care. The nurse will:

- check your personal details
- note any medications you are taking (if you have brought them with you, please give them to the nurse or ask a relative to bring them in for you)
- record your weight, blood pressure, pulse and the oxygen levels in your blood
- screen you for MRSA – all patients admitted to the AMU must be screened for MRSA to help prevent the spread of this infection in our hospitals. Screening involves swabs being taken from the nose and groin area.

Upon admission, you will be assessed by a doctor, unless you were seen by a member of the medical team whilst you were in the emergency department or AAA.

## **People you will meet on the ward**

Your care will be overseen by a consultant for the first 48 hours of your stay on the AMU. If you remain on the AMU for longer than 48 hours, your care will be transferred to a second AMU consultant.

You will be assessed by the medical team twice each day – once in the morning and again in the late afternoon. As patients are seen by different consultant teams on the AMU, you may find that the time you are seen is different to the time that other patients in your area are seen, but please be assured that the doctor will see you every day. In the rare circumstance that you are not seen by a doctor, please inform the nurse in your bay or the nurse in charge.

The AMU is made up of two areas: the Acute Dependency Unit (ADU) and the main ward. The area in which you are depends on your individual needs.

Your care will be provided by a trained nurse with the help of a healthcare assistant. The nurse will check up on you at regular intervals during the day (and night, if you are awake). He/she will also make sure that your call bell is easily accessible. You can use the call bell to attract the nurse's attention at any time.

Different members of the nursing team wear different uniforms. You may find it helpful to identify the type of nurse you are speaking to:

- Matrons wear a turquoise uniform
- Senior sisters wear a red uniform with a white trim
- Junior sisters wear a grey uniform with a red trim
- Senior staff nurses wear a grey uniform with a white trim
- Staff nurses wear a blue and white striped uniform
- Healthcare assistants wear a purple and white striped uniform.

You may also be seen by other members of staff, including dietitians, speech and language therapists or other specialist medical teams if necessary.

## What will happen?

It is likely that you will undergo investigations, such as blood tests, scans and x-rays, which will help us to identify the underlying problem that has brought you into hospital.

If you need to stay in hospital for a longer period of time, it is likely that you will be transferred to another ward when a bed becomes available. We try to transfer people as soon as possible, but you may be transferred late in the evening. For your comfort, we aim not to transfer patients at night.

## Staying safe

Good hand hygiene reduces the risk of hospital infections. Please clean your hands regularly throughout the day. You should also ask your visitors to clean their hands using the alcohol gel provided at the entrance of the ward or at the foot of each bed.

A leaflet entitled 'Making your stay with us safe' is provided at your bedside. This outlines eight simple ways in which you can participate in your own safety in hospital. Please take the time to read it.

## Meals in hospital

Meals are served at approximately the following times:

Breakfast	8am
Lunch	12 noon
Dinner	5pm

We will provide you with a hand wipe at meal times so that you may clean your hands before you eat.

Please let a member of the nursing or hostess team know if you have special dietary requirements.

If you miss a meal on the AMU for any reason (for example, if you are admitted after meal times or if you are away from the unit undergoing investigations or treatment while a meal is being served) we can provide sandwiches or snack boxes. Please speak to the nurse or healthcare assistant in charge of your care if you are hungry.

Hot and cold drinks are available on the ward at any time. Please ask a member of staff to help you.

## Visitors

Visiting hours are from 8am to 8pm. Visitors are welcome, but it is also very important for your health and recovery that you are given plenty of time to rest.

Due to limited space on the ward, we operate a strict policy that each patient has only two visitors at any one time.

We ask that family and friends do not sit on patients' beds. Chairs are provided at the bedside, but please ask the nursing staff if you require more seating.

Family members are welcome to call the ward to ask how you are (contact details given at the end of this leaflet). It is preferable that only one member of your family calls the unit and feeds the information back to other relatives and friends. This is so that we have more time to spend with you and other patients.

Relatives should call after 10am, as this allows the nursing staff time to complete their medication rounds without interruption.

## Cleaning

Cleaning occurs throughout the day on the AMU. We ask you to keep your belongings stored in the bedside lockers provided, as this allows our cleaning staff better access around your bed space.

If at any time you find an area of the unit unclean, please alert a member of staff so that we can rectify this promptly.

## **Going home**

When you are ready to go home, we will make the arrangements with you regarding the following:

### **Medication**

We will give you a supply of any new medication started during your hospital stay and any regular medications where your supply at home is not sufficient. We will also advise you on how and when to take any new medication. If you require further supplies, your GP will be able to provide this. Please ensure that you make an appointment with your GP well before your medications run out.

### **Acute medicine clinic appointments**

If you need to be seen again in our clinic, we will give you an information leaflet, together with the date and time of the appointment.

### **Specialty outpatient clinic appointments**

We will arrange any appointments to specialty clinics before you are discharged from hospital. You should receive the appointment letter in the post within four weeks of discharge. If you do not, please contact the AMU using the contact details given at the end of this leaflet.

### **Your property**

If any money or valuables are being stored, we will return these to you before you leave. Please ensure you take all of your belongings home with you.

### **Transport**

You should arrange for a friend or family to collect you, where possible. If your medical condition means that

you require hospital transport for your return home, your nurse will arrange this for you.

## **Support for when you leave hospital**

If you do need support either to return to your own home or to move to a different care setting, you will be referred to the STAR (social, therapies, assessment and rehabilitation) team. This team consists of occupational therapists, physiotherapists and a Wandsworth social worker.

The STAR team will work with you, your relatives and carers to ensure you receive the right support once you have left hospital. They may also refer you to other community services for rehabilitation.

If you had a social worker before you came into hospital, the STAR team may get in touch with them to ensure your care needs are still appropriate or if a review is needed. If you had a package of care before you came into hospital, this will be restarted for when you leave. The STAR team may also refer you to social services if your care needs have changed (for example, if you require a new care package or an increase of a care package).

## **Patient experience**

It is important to us that your experience of the AMU is a positive one. Your feedback helps us to ensure that we continue to develop our services and improve upon the standard of care we provide to patients. We may ask you to complete an electronic questionnaire while you are on the ward.

Upon discharge, we will ask you to take a few seconds to complete our 'friends and family' test. This asks if you would recommend our services to other people.

## Further information and contacts

If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your care, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff, who can direct you to the right person. We will always do our best to ensure that your stay with us is as comfortable as possible.

The AMU has a senior nurse on duty at all times and a ward matron available between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. He/she will be happy to help with any concerns you may have.

You may find the following contact details helpful:

Acute dependency unit	020 8725 4294/5
Richmond Ward	020 8725 3143/1148/3299

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

---

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



**Reference:** AAE\_AMU\_02 **Published:** September 2019 **Review date:** September 2021