

Intensive Care Patient Diaries

Information for Relatives

This leaflet explains the benefits of keeping a diary for your relative whilst they are on Intensive Care.

What is a patient diary?

Patients often have little or no memory of their time on the ICU. Their memory can be affected by their illness or by the medications we give to keep them comfortable. Sometimes patients may recall nightmares or hallucinations from this time, which can be frightening. Although the doctors and the nurses explain to patients why they were admitted to the ICU, patients often forget what we have told them. Research suggests that this can cause patients to become stressed and anxious.

To help patients understand more about their illness and their time on the ICU, we have therefore introduced patient diaries – a written record of your relative's time on the ICU

How does it work?

The nursing staff will start a diary for your relative, writing down what has been happening during each day. Other healthcare professionals, including doctors and physiotherapists may also contribute. We also encourage family members to write in the diary, to pass on your messages or to relay information from home.

What should be written in the diary?

The diary should include information in which your relative would normally be interested. This might be information about home or other relatives, news and current affairs or any emotional messages you'd like to give them. When writing in the diary, we ask that you avoid using any language that may cause offence. We also ask that the diary is not used to voice complaints about your relative's care, as this may cause them unnecessary anxiety and worry when they read it. If you have any concerns about the treatment or care your loved one is receiving, please discuss them with the nurse looking after your relative or with the nurse in charge.

The patient should be the first person to read the completed diary. Out of respect for your loved one's privacy, we therefore ask that you do not read the diary entries made by others. Please be assured that the information written by staff members is the same information we will be giving to you when you visit your relative.

What happens to the diary when my relative is out of ICU?

Once your relative has been discharged from ICU, their diary will be made available to them by the ICU staff. This may be when they are on the general ward, in an ICU follow-up clinic or at some other suitable time. Some patients do not want to read the diary. The decision lies with the patient and staff and relatives should be respectful of this. The patient will be required to sign a form identifying their wishes for the diary.

Please remember - the diary remains hospital property until it is handed over to the patient and they have signed a consent form. Diaries must not be taken away from the bedside by relatives. Please remember - the diary remains hospital property until it is handed over to the patient and a consent form is signed.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your diary, contact us at icufollowup@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Useful sources of information

ICUsteps, the intensive care patient support charity
[Home - ICUsteps](#)

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Was this information helpful? Yes / No

Please let us know, contact patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk and include the leaflet title.

Thank you.

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** 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

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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