

Cultural, privacy and dignity issues

We understand that people have cultural, religious and personal needs. We cannot offer single sex bays in ICU, but we will try to meet your privacy and dignity needs. If you have any special cultural, personal or hygiene needs, please tell your nurse.

A telephone and face-to-face interpreter service is available for patients who cannot communicate in English.

Physiotherapist

If you have been in ICU for any length of time, you will have lost muscle strength. The physiotherapist will assess your muscle strength and co-ordination. They will also help develop a plan for you to take more control over your personal care.

Infection control link nurses

ICU has a team of nurses that are responsible for providing information about infection control. Infection Control is a department that aims to prevent the spread of infection within the hospital.

Patient Advice (PALS)

PALS provide impartial information, advice and support for patients and carers. They can help you deal with any queries or concerns that you are having difficulty resolving.

Occupational therapy

Is a service that helps with daily living activities. They can provide equipment and advice to help with these tasks.

Oral and maxillofacial services

Dental services based at the Eastman Dental Hospital offer dental assessment and treatment plans to UCL Hospitals patients.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please ask. We will try to meet your needs.

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Oral and personal hygiene

Information for patients and carers

ICU (Intensive Care Unit)



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On admission to ICU, a nurse will assess all aspects of your care.

It is important for us to know about your personal and oral care needs (or those of the person you care for).

Personal hygiene facilities

On ICU we provide facilities and assistance for you to take care of your personal hygiene needs.

- Toilets
- Showers
- Commodes
- Individual wash bowls
- Sinks
- Mirrors (on request)
- Lifting devices

Toiletries

We will provide basic toiletries, but we encourage your relatives or friends to bring in your own toiletries.

Oral hygiene

Good oral care is very important for your comfort and wellbeing. Your mouth provides the first line of defence against infection. Your medical treatment may also affect your mouth.

Patients in intensive care are more vulnerable to oral disease and discomfort.

Mouth and dental care

Your teeth and tongue should be cleaned twice a day with a brush and rinsed with water. Foam sticks are used in-between brushing to moisten your mouth.

Dentures should be removed at least twice a day, cleaned with a brush and rinsed with water. They must be soaked overnight in water or a denture solution.

The frequency and type of mouth care required depends on your treatment (such as steroid inhalers, radiotherapy and chemotherapy).

If your relative has a breathing tube in place, a baby toothbrush or electric toothbrush is better. Unfortunately we are unable to provide these for you.

Soft paraffin can be used on dry lips. During your stay in hospital, your oral and personal hygiene needs will be assessed regularly.

Your care plan will be updated to ensure your needs are met.

If you have been a patient in ICU for some time, it is important to develop a routine when carrying out your personal and oral hygiene tasks. This will help you to take control over an important part of your care, improve your strength and help your recovery.

If you have any questions or concerns about oral and personal hygiene ask your nurse, who will be happy to help.

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