



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Welcome to the Acute Medical Unit and Higher Monitoring Unit**

Information for patients,  
relatives and carers

**Please use the hand gel provided  
when entering and leaving the Unit**

|              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| AMU1         | Tel: 0118 322 6936 / 6937 |
| AMU2<br>+HMU | Tel: 0118 322 5692 / 5693 |

## **About the Acute Medical Unit (AMU)**

You will come to AMU from the Emergency Department (A&E) and will need to be seen by the medical team or admitted to a bed.

AMU is on level 1 in Centre Block and is divided into two areas: AMU1 and AMU2; we have an open plan layout which helps us to closely monitor you. We also have a Higher Monitoring Unit (HMU) for patients who require closer monitoring.

You will be admitted to either AMU 1 or 2, where you will be cared for by a particular AMU doctor and nursing team. Your allocated nurse will take a set of observations and make you comfortable. You will then be reviewed by one of the acute medical doctors who will assess and examine you to develop a care plan. A junior doctor will ensure that your care plan is reviewed regularly, with support from your consultant team and other professionals working in AMU.

Appropriate tests will be carried out and the results shared with you when available. The assessment process will take around 4-6 hours. We will maintain your privacy and dignity at all times and strive to prevent mixing male and female patients in the same bedded bays. Unfortunately, on some occasions, this is unavoidable due to the busy nature of the unit.

## **A typical day on AMU**

The consultants' ward rounds start at 8am each morning, and you may be visited by either an AMU consultant or one of the visiting consultants from varying specialities, e.g. respiratory medicine, gastroenterology, neurology etc, depending on your plan of care. Please be aware that these ward rounds can last until 11.30am, and you may not be seen in order of your arrival time but in order of your clinical need. We will do our best to see you as soon as possible. Throughout the day you may also be visited by a member of the pharmacy or therapy teams to ensure you are getting the right treatment to support your recovery. Nurses' drugs rounds are between 8am-10am, 12pm-2pm, 5pm-7pm and 9pm-11pm. Some patients admitted to AMU may need to be 'nil-by-mouth'.

This means that they cannot eat and drink until they are seen by a doctor or specialist swallow nurse. We know it can be upsetting to be without food or water, but it is necessary for patient safety.

## **Medication**

Please check with your nurse whether it is ok to take your regular medication. Sometimes, your regular medication may be stopped or changed. It will be stored securely in the locker provided for you. All controlled drugs will be kept in a controlled drug cupboard.

## **What to bring with you**

Please bring any current medication or a repeat prescription sheet, comfortable clothes, slippers or shoes, walking aids, things to read or to occupy yourself, and basic toiletries. Your belongings are your responsibility. Please label property if able. **Please do not bring in any valuables.**

## **Meals**

Breakfast is between 8am and 10am. Lunch is a hot or cold meal between 12pm and 2pm. Dinner is a hot or cold meal between 5pm and 7pm. If you arrive after this time, we can still offer you a snack-box. Please let one of the unit staff know if you are hungry.

## **Side rooms**

Side rooms are for patients who are either potentially infectious or who are at an increased risk of getting infections from others. To reduce the infection risk, we keep the doors closed and ask those entering these rooms to wash their hands and to check with a nurse before going in. We are unable to provide private single rooms. If you have any concerns, please speak to the nurse in charge.

## **What happens if I need to be admitted to hospital?**

If you need to stay in hospital, you will be moved to an appropriate specialist ward, depending on bed availability. You might also be transferred to a ward that is not your speciality, but your doctors would come and see you in those wards.

Sometimes, you might stay on AMU for more than 48 hours. However you will continue to get your prescribed treatment and your speciality doctors will continue to see you on AMU. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to contact your family members/carers to inform them you will be transferred, due to the busy nature of the unit. We ask that family members/carers contact the unit after 11am in order to let them know if you are still on the unit. **Confidential information cannot be communicated via the telephone.** Please call us after 11.30am and nominate one family member to ring the ward.

## **What happens if I am to be discharged?**

You will be involved in your discharge planning and will be given an estimated discharge date. We will provide you with any necessary medication to take with you, and also a summary of care which details any treatment you have received. Those awaiting relatives/carers to collect them will be transferred to the discharge lounge. Please speak to your nurse if you have any concerns regarding your discharge

## **Help and enquiries**

For general enquiries, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0118 322 8338 or email [PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk).

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, care and treatment please contact switchboard on 0118 322 5111, who will transfer you to the correct department.

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or audio, please contact AMU or HMU.**