



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Your stay in the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU)

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

This leaflet explains what to expect when you stay on the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU) – also known as ‘Recovery’.

What is PACU?

PACU is part of the Theatres Suite and is one large room serving all operating theatres. You will be transferred into PACU straight from theatre at the end of your operation and will spend time here before returning to the ward. PACU is on Level 3 South Block next to the Intensive Care Unit.

What happens in PACU?

On arrival in PACU, you will have some monitoring equipment attached by a PACU practitioner to record your observations. This will usually be a cuff around your arm to measure blood pressure, a probe on your finger to measure your body's oxygen and three leads on your chest, to record your heart rate and rhythm. Sometimes, further monitoring may be necessary but this will usually be explained by the anaesthetist before the operation or afterwards by a PACU practitioner. You will be monitored the whole time you are in PACU and the practitioner will check whether you have any pain or nausea / sickness, and can give you medication for this. Once the PACU practitioner, surgeon and anaesthetist are happy with your condition, you will be transferred to a ward by the PACU staff or a ward nurse and a porter.



Contact

Your family and friends are able to phone PACU directly with enquiries on **0118 322 7624** or **0118 322 7621**. Patient confidentiality must be maintained, so only limited information can be provided about the details of the operation.

What is an 'extended stay'/ PACU overnight?

Some patients may need to stay in PACU for a longer period of time, possibly up to several hours,

This will depend on the type of operation you have had, your medical history or any unforeseen circumstances resulting in the need for further monitoring and attention. Overnight stays in PACU may be booked in advance, decided upon on the morning of surgery or following your operation, when you are already in PACU.

What to bring with you

PACU does not have the same bathroom facilities as wards. A PACU practitioner can bring you a bowl of hot water to wash but you will need your own toiletries. Basic toiletries can be provided if you do not have any with you.

On admission for surgery, your personal belongings will usually be taken straight to the ward that you will be returning to. With your consent, PACU staff are able to retrieve anything you need from your belongings upon request. Please do not bring valuables into hospital but if unavoidable, they can be locked away. Your glasses and dentures will accompany you to theatre and will go with you into PACU for when you wake up.

Privacy and dignity

We will endeavour to maintain your privacy and dignity at all times, but as this is a specialist area, you may sometimes be mixed with another sex. Curtains can be used for privacy as necessary.

Food and drink

Depending on your surgery, and with the surgeon's consent, it may be possible to eat and drink while you are still in PACU. This will start with sips of water and, if tolerated, then a hot drink. Hot drinks and biscuits are available from PACU, and sandwiches, yoghurts



and fruit are available during the day. If you are able to eat a hot meal, this will be available in the evening from a choice of menu.

Television and telephone

As PACU is not a ward area, we do not have patient televisions. However, feel free to bring your own smart device and headphones in from home.

We do not have patient bedside telephones but we do have a portable telephone at the nurse's station that you can use to call a relative. Or feel free to use your own mobile, but please respect others by keeping ringtones and conversations low and please do not use the camera device on your phone in the unit.



Visiting advice

During the day, PACU can be very busy, so only one visitor is allowed to visit their family member in PACU for 20 minutes. Patients with special needs or children admitted to the unit may be accompanied by carers / parents; this should be prearranged with PACU staff. Please refer to the separate PACU visiting charter for further visiting advice.



Help and feedback

We welcome your views on PACU. If you have, any comments or concerns please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0118 322 8338 or email PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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