



Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Welcome to the Surgical Assessment Unit (SAU)

Information for patients,  
relatives and carers

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## **You have been admitted to the Surgical Assessment Unit (usually called SAU). This leaflet explains what happens here and what you can expect.**

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### **What and where is the SAU?**

The SAU is located on Level 3 in South Block.

The SAU Team care for patients with a surgical problem, who may need to be admitted to hospital. Referrals are made to the SAU by GPs, clinics and the Emergency Department (A&E).

### **What happens when I arrive in the SAU?**

The SAU nurse will:

- Greet you and confirm your details.
- Check your blood pressure and temperature.
- Ask about your level of pain.
- Take some blood – this may involve inserting a cannula (a small plastic line) that can stay in your vein for up to 72 hours. This is used to administer medication and fluids if required.
- Take a urine sample to test for infection.
- Do a pregnancy test for women of childbearing age. **If you think you may be pregnant, please tell the nurse.**

## **How does SAU work?**

A senior doctor will review your investigations. Please be aware that the senior doctors are not based on SAU; they also see patients and are called to emergencies in other areas of the hospital. **Because of this, it is possible that you will have a long wait of several hours between your investigations and the doctor's review.**

Once the doctor has seen you, you will receive advice on the next steps in your care plan. This may involve further investigations and being admitted to hospital.

## **Can I eat and drink?**

You may take sips of water unless the nurse advised you not to on your arrival, but **you should not eat anything** as this can delay scans or procedures.

## **Being admitted / discharged**

If the doctor decides that you need to be admitted to hospital, we will transfer you to a ward as soon as possible.

If you are well enough to be discharged, we will give you a letter written by the doctors to take home with you (or you will be sent one in the post a few days after your discharge). A copy will also be sent to your GP. Any medication that you may need will be provided by the hospital pharmacy or the ward before you leave hospital.

## **What about my privacy and dignity?**

We respect the privacy and dignity of all our patients. We will maintain this by closing the curtains during examinations and procedures and by ensuring that patients wear appropriate clothing.

## **How can I help with infection control?**

Please use the hand gel located by sinks and on bedside cabinets.

## **What are the visiting hours?**

Due to space on the unit, visiting is restricted. This means only essential visits, e.g. for patients with dementia or learning disability or will be authorised by the ward manager or nurse in charge.

## **What if I have a question or problem?**

If you have a question or problem please do not hesitate to ask any of the nursing staff on the SAU.

Surgical Assessment Unit tel: 0118 322 7541/ 7542.

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

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

Hayley Doyle, SAU, April 2015

Reviewed by GSU Ward Manager Sam Jones, March 2025

Next review due: March 2027