

On leaving the Department of Critical Care Medicine

You have had a serious illness but are now well enough to leave critical care. You no longer need constant observation by a nurse and your body no longer needs the support of a ventilator or other supportive equipment.

The time you spend in the ward is an important part of your recovery and rehabilitation. The care you receive will be less intensive but just as necessary to prepare you for discharge from the hospital.

Initially everything you do will seem like hard work. At times it will seem like you are making no progress for all your effort. It helps to set yourself *short term goals* along with the ward staff and work towards them gradually.

Common problems experienced

Feeling tired and weak – it is normal to feel like this following a serious illness as during this time you have been on bed rest and your muscles have become weak. Once you start exercising your strength will gradually return. Be patient and be sure to take regular rest periods.

Loss of appetite – During your illness you will have probably been fed via a naso-

gastric tube and food would have been in a liquid form. When you are well enough to eat solid food again you may not feel like eating much or have episodes of nausea. Try to eat small but frequent amounts of food. If you are becoming constipated let your nurse know.

Feeling emotional – During your serious illness you will have had pain relief and sedation and been in a strange environment. All of these can disrupt your body rhythms and they will take sometime to get back to normal. You may also experience disturbing dreams and these may be due to the medication you have received during your hospitalisation. If these occur, talk about them and let your nurse know.

Moving from critical care to a ward – It is normal to feel a little anxious on leaving critical care. It is important though that you realise you are safe and that everything is in place for your recovery.

A number of nurses will be caring for you, as well as caring for other patients. The nurse call button will assist locating a nurse when you require one.

Depending on your condition you may also be seen each day by the following staff: doctors, physiotherapists, dieticians,

occupational therapists, the pain and trauma teams and the DCCM Nurse Specialist.

Tracheostomy care

If you have a tracheostomy tube in place this aspect of care will be either managed by the neurosurgical nurses if you are in that ward, or followed-up by the DCCM Nurse Specialist.

Visitors

You will still be allowed visitors, although some wards do not allow visiting at specific times. You may find your visitors can be tiring, so try to have just a couple visit you each day rather than everyone at once.



Before you go home come by and visit us in Dept. of Critical Care on level 8, we would appreciate seeing how you are.

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Healthcare staff available to you through your nursing staff.

Te Whanau Atawhai
Social Worker
Chaplain
ACC Case Worker
General Practitioner

DCCM Nurse Specialist Service

You may be visited by the DCCM Nurse Specialist in your new ward to check your progress.

Patient follow-up service

All our patients are followed up by 'phone after transferring from DCCM. The patient or immediate next-of-kin will receive a call from one of our staff nurses to see how they are progressing. This is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and provide us with some feedback that could benefit other patients.

A note for family/whanau members

While you may feel the need to be with your relative, it is also important that you take care of yourself. Make sure you get enough time to rest and eat regular meals.

The nursing staff are responsible for your relative's care. You may be able to

participate more in their care now that they are on the ward. Take this time to learn about their care and ways in which you can be helpful once they leave hospital.

There will be a lot to remember about your care, both in the hospital and after discharge. It helps to write down the important things. Here are a few suggestions:

Your ward number, nurses' names, doctors' names, clinic appointment times and dates, questions you wish to ask etc.

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References:
DCCM Ward Transfer Policy
DCCM Follow-up Service
DCCM Nurse Specialist Service

Goodbye and best wishes from the staff of Department of Critical Care Medicine

Ward Transfer

Leaving the Department of Critical Care Medicine

General advice for patients and their families/whanau on transferring to the Ward from the Department of Critical Care Medicine