



## **Welcome to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)**

PICU is a sixteen-bedded unit which has been specially designed to care for children from birth to 15 years. Children are admitted to PICU from throughout New Zealand for a wide variety of reasons. Your child has been admitted to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit because they need close medical and nursing attention. We understand that having your child admitted to PICU can be a frightening and stressful experience.

You are welcome to stay by your child's bedside as much as you wish. While in PICU, your child will have a nurse with them at all times.

Our direct phone number is **(09) 307-4903** - feel free to call at any time.

PICU has a team approach and depending on your child's needs a number of people may be involved in their care. This includes physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers, Kaiatawhai, play specialists and other hospital teams.

### **Care of Your Child**

We have a wide range of specialist doctors and nurses who have expertise in children's conditions. Your child's nurses and doctors will explain procedures and equipment used. We encourage you to ask questions to ensure you understand what is happening with your child.

Your child will be admitted to Starship under a primary team. This is a team of doctors who specialise in your child's condition. When your child is admitted to PICU the medical care is shared between a primary team and our team of doctors who specialise in Intensive Care.

Rounds are held at 8.00am and 8.00pm each day and at other times as necessary. These rounds may be held at the bedside. You are welcome to remain in the unit during medical ward rounds. Due to time constraints they are not an appropriate time to discuss treatment with parents. During the day, at a mutually convenient time, a member of the medical team will come back to provide progress updates and answer questions. The doctors from your child's primary team will also visit at some time on most days.

We will inform you of any changes in your child's condition or treatment given, although sometimes it is not possible to do this until later if urgent treatment is required. At such times we will inform you as soon as possible.

While in PICU, it is likely that we will need to do blood tests and x-rays on your child to help us guide treatment. There are some procedures your child may undergo that you may be asked to sign consent for.

At Starship, we practice family-centred care. **You are encouraged to be involved in the care of your child as much as possible, and it is very important to us that you understand your child's illness and treatment.** Even when in Intensive Care, babies and children still like to be talked to, sung to, read to and touched. Feel free to bring in one or two favourite named toys or books for your child's comfort.

Most children won't remember very much about being in Intensive Care. We aim to keep your child as comfortable as possible and may need to give sedatives or painkillers. For children who cannot eat, we often give food via a tube through the nose that goes into the stomach. Your child may require special treatment while in PICU, including breathing support from a ventilator and fluid and medications that are given directly into the bloodstream via a vein. Most children in PICU are connected to monitors to make it easier for us to watch them closely.

For the safety of your child while in PICU, it may be necessary to use bed rails. In order to facilitate your child's treatment, it may be necessary to use "straight arm" splints to prevent your child accidentally pulling out any of their tubes or lines. At times it may be necessary for staff to hold your child still to accomplish a procedure. Staff are trained in the safe use of these splints and holds. While these steps are a necessary part of our daily practice, we only use them when necessary and aim to inform you ahead of time.

Throughout your child's stay in PICU we plan for your child's progression to the ward in partnership with you. A PICU Outreach nurse will meet you prior to discharge from PICU and again in the ward environment to ensure a smooth transition occurs.

The staff in PICU are committed to working with families in a considerate and respectful way. It is expected that families show the same consideration and respect to the staff. In order to keep the environment safe for everyone, behaviour that is inconsiderate or disrespectful will be addressed. Working together in this way will assist us in providing a safe environment and the best care for you, your child and your family.

Please discuss any concerns you may have with your child's nurse, Clinical Charge Nurse or shift co-ordinator or the unit Nurse Manager.

### **Visiting**

- Parents and caregivers are not considered visitors. You are welcome to be with your child at any time.
- We encourage the support of Whanau / families and friends. For the children's wellbeing, we encourage night time visiting to be restricted to parents or caregivers only. If you yourself wish to restrict visitors to your child at any time, please let your child's nurse know.
- As our bed spaces are often crowded, we would appreciate only a small number of people around the bed at a time, to make it quieter for your child and easier for us to care for them.
- When certain procedures are being carried out on your child or another child in the unit, you may be asked or prefer to wait in the family room.
- Visiting children must be supervised at all times by an adult.
- Please respect the privacy of other patients in our unit and only visit the child you have come to see. Staff are unable to answer questions about other patients or give patient information over the phone.
- Childhood illnesses and infectious diseases may be extremely dangerous to some of our children. Please do not visit or bring other children to visit if you or they are unwell or have had contact with an infectious disease. Adults with any signs of infection should talk to the bedside nurse before visiting.
- Ideally, unrelated children should not visit without discussion with PICU staff.
- Some of our children may have infections that pose a hazard to others. It is recommended that you check with the bedside nurse prior to bringing any baby of less than one year to visit.

### **Facilities for Families**

#### **Family Rooms**

There is a family area opposite the main entrance to PICU. This area consists of an unsupervised playroom for children, TV access, toilets and a quiet room, showering and baby change facilities. There are also drink-making facilities in the pantry by the entrance to PICU and a food vending machine for your use. The family area is for your use at any time during the day but will be locked overnight. Access to the toilets will remain open. We are unable to be responsible for supervision of children visiting.

#### **Ronald McDonald Day Area**

There is a quiet, child-free rest area with hot drink facilities available on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Starship.

#### **Balcony Area**

For parents and siblings only.

#### **Parking**

There is very limited free parking available for parents in designated parent parking. You will need a display card for your car, which your nurse can provide.

#### **Food**

Meals are provided for breast-feeding mothers. There is a small kitchen with tea and coffee making facilities in the unit so please help yourself to drinks. Vending machines are also available in the PICU family area opposite the main entrance to PICU.

You may drink at your child's bedside but please use the family room for eating. Although we are unable to provide meals for families please let us know if you have not eaten so that we can try to organise something for you.

#### **Breast Feeding Mothers**

Your child may be unable to breast-feed while in PICU. If this is the case, you will be encouraged to express breast milk to enable you to continue breast feeding once your child is able.

Please discuss the facilities available for expressing with your nurse.

If you are concerned about your milk supply, we will try to access a lactation consultant to see you.

### **Time Out**

Parents react to their child being in PICU in different ways. You may feel that you can't cope with seeing your child this way, or you may feel that you can't leave him/her. It is important that you get enough rest particularly if you are breastfeeding. Eating sensibly will also help you keep well. The Starship Consult Liaison Team is also available if you wish to talk to someone about how you're feeling.

### **Accommodation**

Unfortunately we do not have the room to provide sleeping accommodation in the unit. Every effort is made to accommodate one parent or caregiver within the hospital depending on the availability of beds. Shared accommodation is available in the Whare Awhina, Grafton Flats and at Ronald McDonald house with priority given to families from outside Auckland. There will be a small charge. If you have financial concerns our social worker may be able to assist with this.

### **Our Commitment to You**

If you have any questions about your child's care or treatment please do not hesitate to ask the doctors or nurses looking after your child. Sometimes it is helpful to write down a list of questions. We try our hardest to do what is best for your child, but if you feel uncomfortable about something that is happening please feel able to ask for more information.

For further information, please ask PICU staff for the Patient Information Binder.