

Why Does My Loved One Act That Way?

Your loved one may act in ways that surprise or distress you. They may seem angry, confused, aggressive, restless or just different. This may be a result of fear, frustration, medication or their disease.

Your loved one may say and do things that he or she would not normally do. This may go away as their condition improves.

Calm, reassuring talk or touch is usually helpful and soothing. Even if your loved one does not respond, it is still important to talk to them. A familiar voice is comforting. Occasionally, over stimulation may occur. If this happens, the nurse will instruct you how you can be supportive in other ways.

Why Does My Loved One Look That Way?

Caring for your loved one may require different kinds of equipment and machinery. This may be overwhelming to see.

Your loved one may have their hands restrained. Attempts are made to avoid this, but sometimes it is necessary and is done only to ensure his/her safety.

Your loved one's appearance may change during a critical illness. He/she may become swollen. This is very common and occurs for many reasons. There is little that can be done to prevent the swelling. Rings will be removed to protect the blood flow to the fingertips. Bruising is also very common. Again, care will be taken to minimize this.

Hospital Resources

Our social workers, chaplains and Child Life Specialist can help you to obtain resources or answer questions. They can also provide support for you and your loved ones. Do not hesitate to ask for them.

A Chapel and a Multi-Faith room are both located on this floor by the Morrow Wing elevators. The Multi-faith Room is located in room 2M12. Both are open 24-hours a day.

The Centre for Clinical Ethics provides confidential services to families free of charge about ethical issues including consent and capacity and/or treatment decisions. Ask your nurse to arrange a meeting or call them at 416-530-6750.

Some people find it helpful to keep a diary of their time with the ICU. If you would like more information about this, please ask your nurse.

We realize this is a very stressful time for you and your family. If there is anything we can do to make this time easier for you, please ask.

What to Expect in the Intensive Care Unit

For Patients and Families



What to Expect in the ICU

General Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Routines

Specially trained intensive care physicians will be responsible for your loved one's care. Each of these physicians will manage care for one week at a time. Every week a detailed report will be given to the next physician so that care is consistent. The unit operates on 12-hour shifts. During each shift change (7:30 until 8:00) the nurses will be giving a report to the on-coming nurses. During this time, visitors will be asked to wait outside. This is to protect patient privacy.

Visiting hours are from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily. In extreme circumstances, these hours can be flexible. Two (2) visitors are allowed at the bedside for short visits, at the discretion of the nurse. Because your loved one requires ongoing care and monitoring, visiting is controlled. Visitors are restricted to family members only. The family will screen visiting from friends.

You may hear different alarms while visiting. Each alarm is examined and interpreted by our staff. Action will be taken if needed.

Before a child visits, we strongly encourage that he/she is prepared. The nurse or Child Life Specialist can help you with this.

A quiet room is available for families whose loved one is critically ill. The use of this room is determined by taking all patients into consideration, on a day-by-day basis. The main visitors lounge is equipped with a television and telephone for local calls.

Family Spokesperson

This person will communicate between the medical team and the family. Having a spokesperson eliminates many repetitive calls to the ICU, which takes the nurse away from the patient's bedside. Information will be restricted to the family spokesperson and/or substitute decision maker. Many family members and friends will be anxious to hear about how your loved one is doing. The hospital will not give out specific information about your loved one. You may decide to tell them as much or as little as you want.

Obtaining Information

In general, the bedside nurse will update you about events of the day. Also, the physician may want to meet with you to provide a medical update and plan of care. You can also request a family meeting with the physician. The bedside nurse will arrange this for you. These meetings normally occur Monday through Friday between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Taking Care of Yourself

Your well-being is important because you are an essential part of the healing process. It is normal to feel helpless, tense or emotional. During these times, do not feel you have to be available every moment. Remember, patients are closely monitored in the unit at all times. To help reduce stress, try these tips: walk around or stretch if possible, eat balanced meals and get enough sleep. All of this can help you to understand and remember information you are given. If friends for family come to visit, use that opportunity to take a break from the hospital. They may even be able to help you with needs at home or work. Remember that the period in the ICU may be the beginning of a longer recovery.

Prepare Yourself

During this difficult time, you will have many questions. When you think of a question you want to ask the doctor, write it down. This way, you won't forget to ask about something you feel is important. If something is unclear, don't be afraid to ask for clarification. Prepare yourself for setbacks but concentrate on the steps taken forward. Try not to become discouraged. Like your loved one, it is normal for family and friends to have both good days and bad days.