

## High Dependency Unit (HDU) Pre-operative Information Leaflet

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### What is HDU?

HDU is a 2-bedded unit located on Gynaecology unit on the 2nd floor. This unit looks after patients immediately after surgery when they are in need of continuous, specialist care which is not available on a general ward.

Most of the patients in HDU are transferred to a general ward within 24 / 48 hours.

In some rare cases, if more specialised care and investigations are required, patients may be transferred to an Intensive Care Unit at another hospital. A specialist team of doctors and nurses will accompany patients in these circumstances.

### The Medical Staff

Doctors specialising in anaesthesia and Gynaecology are available for the unit 24 hours a day.

There is a ward round every morning during which decisions are made regarding your treatment plan and possible transfer to the ward. Your care will be reviewed as necessary during the day and night by the team

#### The Nursing Staff

The nursing and medical staff work closely together to make sure you receive high quality care and treatment.

A trained HDU nurse who has completed extra critical care training will care for you during your stay. They will be responsible for all your nursing needs.

Whilst in HDU you will be looked after / by the multidisciplinary team

Consultant Anaesthetist  
Consultant Gynaecologist  
SHO (Senior House Officer) /SPR (Specialist Registrar) Anaesthetist  
SHO/SPR Gynaecologist  
Twenty four hour HDU trained nursing team  
Specialist Nurses- When required  
Operating Department Practitioner- When required  
Physiotherapy team- when required  
Dietician- when required  
Pharmacy team will review daily  
Radiology team- when required  
Microbiology (infection control) team- when required  
Hospital Chaplaincy- when required

### Equipment

The equipment and sounds within HDU may make you feel anxious. This equipment is necessary and all the staff are experienced in its use, and will answer any questions you may have. Some of the equipment we use include:

### **Breathing equipment**

Usually oxygen is given to patients through a face mask or nasal specs. However you may need help with your breathing and be attached to a machine that improves breathing. (CPAP) – see separate leaflet. The nurse will fully explain all care that is given.

### **Monitors**

Leads on your chest and drips in your arm, neck or chest will be connected to a Monitor to help us to measure and record your heart rate, blood pressure and fluid balance.

This allows staff to detect any changes in your condition.

### **Drips/Pumps**

Most patients have several drips in their hand or arm on very rare occasion's this may also be in foot, neck or chest.

The fluid pumps regulate fluid given to you through these drips whilst you are unable to eat or drink. Prescribed antibiotics and other drugs can also be given through these drips.

### **Drains/Catheters**

Drains to allow fluid to drain from your wound are often inserted in theatre. A tube is also inserted into your bladder (catheter) to allow us to monitor your urine output.

## **Pain Control**

You may have an epidural, PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia) and/or a rectus sheath catheter to help control your pain after your operation. The anaesthetist will discuss with you before your operation the type of pain relief most suitable for you. Your nurse will be checking your level of pain, making sure that the pain killing drugs are working.

## **Diet**

On rare occasions you may be unable to eat for a few days and it may be necessary to be fed using 'specialist fluids' in a tube through your nose into your stomach (nasogastric tube).

This will provide energy to help you recover from your operation, improve wound healing and help reduce infection.

Your consultant will discuss this with you if you if they think it may be necessary post-operation.

## **Movement**

The leads attached to your chest, oxygen mask, drips, drains etc. may restrict your movement. The nurses will ensure you are moved as carefully and gently as possible.

## **Noise**

HDU can be quite noisy. Do not be afraid if alarms sound on the machines. This is quite normal and does not necessarily mean that anything is wrong.

## **Lighting/Windows**

HDU is bright during the day. We dim the lights at night to enable you to sleep.

## Patient's belongings

A patient's stay on HDU is usually short. Due to limited space we advise that all belongings are taken home until you are transferred to a ward. We use our gowns to allow for easy access to drips etc. You may want to bring a toilet bag. Following emergency admission a small selection of toiletries can be provided.

## Visiting

Visiting times are between 13.30 - 14.30 hrs & 18.00 - 19.30 hrs.

This is to make sure you have a rest period, You will need lots of rest after your operation.

We advise limiting visitors to next of kin and close family only, two visitors at the bedside only please.

## Enquiries

We ask that only one person be chosen to telephone to ask about you on behalf of your family and friends as this limits the amount of time that the nursing staff spends away from the patients.

## Physiotherapy

A physiotherapist will visit you if needed. They will encourage you with both breathing exercises and limb movements.

## Transfer

When you are ready to be transferred to the ward your care will be handed over to your Consultant's medical team and ward nurses.

## Outreach team

The team offers advice and support when necessary, and follows up all patients who have been in HDU once they have been transferred to the ward.

We appreciate this may be a stressful time for you. We will do our utmost to ensure your stay on HDU is as comfortable as possible.

The Liverpool Women's Hospital is part of the Mersey and Cheshire Critical Care Network. This helps us provide the best and most up to date care available.

We are proud of our unit and aim to give the very best care possible.

However, if you have a complaint or suggestion on improving the service, please see the nurse on duty or ask to speak to the HDU.manager

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to visit the unit before admission please do not hesitate to call us on 0151 708 9988 ext 1023.

Please note that Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke free site. Smoking is not allowed inside the hospital building or within the hospital grounds, car parks and gardens.

This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at [pals@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lwh.nhs.uk)

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