

Introduction;

Heart surgery is a stressful experience for the parents and family. This pamphlet aims to provide you with a guide of what to expect in the course of your child's care & recovery after their operation.

When surgery is completed your child will be transferred to the Children's Intensive Care Unit (located on Level 1) for care. When your child is well enough they will be transferred back to the cardiac ward (C2 South) on level 2.

Preoperative Care in C2 South

Prior to your child's surgery you will be admitted to **C2 South**. If you and your child have not attended a pre-operative clinic before this day, your child will need some of the following tests: blood test, urine sample, chest x-ray, ECG (electrocardiogram), +/- cardiac echo and a nose or throat swab. All of these tests will be explained to you more thoroughly once your child has been admitted.

It may be possible for you to go to the intensive care unit the day before your child's operation if this has not been available to you from the pre-admission clinic. This will give you an opportunity to become familiar with the layout and routine of the Intensive Care Unit.

An anaesthetist will examine your child in the afternoon of the day prior to the operation. They will ask you some questions about your child and make sure that your child is ready for surgery. They will give you some information about your child having an anaesthetic, and let you know what time your child will need to fast from. They will give you 2 different times. The first will be from what time they are to stop eating and the second will be from what time they need to stop drinking fluids. The anaesthetist will also give you an approximation of what time your child will go to theatre. Occasionally the surgery has to be rescheduled due to other emergencies.

On the day of your child's operation, one of the nursing staff from C2South will escort you and your child to the operating theatres. Once your child is under anaesthetic (asleep) the anaesthetist will give you some idea of how long your child will be in the operating theatre.

As the surgery can take a several hours it is advisable to take this opportunity to rest or take a walk out of the hospital. You can leave a contact phone number with the Children's Intensive Care unit (CICU) so that we can contact you. When the time is closer for your child to come out of the operation you can wait in the (CICU) waiting room. Once the operation is finished your child will be taken directly to CICU.

Children's Intensive Care Unit

The Intensive Care Unit (CICU) provides a high level of care for children who are very sick. Therefore access to CICU is limited. To enter CICU you will need to press the call button next to the door. Someone will answer and unlock the doors for you to enter (See Map on the back).

Visiting

Parents and family are welcome at any time, but there are some limits to the number of visitors at any one time as the children in CICU are very sick and we need to keep their environment as quiet as possible. Siblings and other children are also welcome, but the parents should be aware that the CICU environment may be distressing for them, therefore parents should ensure they are prepared before bringing children into CICU.

Note:

1. There is a Medical and Nursing patient hand-over at 8am to 9.30am each day and all visitors are asked to leave in that time, in order to maintain patient confidentiality.
2. Visitors other than parents need to seek parental consent prior to visiting

Nursing & Medical Care in Intensive Care (CICU)

A skilled team of Nurses and Doctors will care for your child while they are in the hospital. In the Intensive Care they will have one nurse with them at all times while they are recovering, particularly in the first few days. There are a minimum of 2 doctors in the ICU at all times and the cardiac surgical and cardiology team will visit your child regularly to monitor their progress.



Your Child's Care immediately after arriving in CICU

Your child will come directly from the operating theatre to the Intensive Care Unit. It will take a short period of time to organize your child when they arrive, this may take 30 minutes or longer at times. You will be able to see your child as soon as possible after your child's return.

Your child may be intubated (have a breathing tube) and be attached to a ventilator to help them breathe for a period of time after the operation. They will be kept asleep and pain free with medication infusion while they are recovering. There will be many monitors attached so the Nurses and Doctors can closely watch their breathing, heart beat, blood pressure, temperature, etc.

Care & Recovery

Your child's recovery time will depend on the type of surgery they have had and therefore will be different each child. The Nurses and Doctors in CICU will be able to answer any questions that you may have regarding the care and recovery of your child.

Parent/Visitor Waiting Room

This room is available for 24-hour use by the parents and visitors. There is a kitchen where you can make coffee & tea and a refrigerator available for your use. For safety reasons you are asked NOT to take hot drinks into CICU at any time and for hygiene reasons, food consumption in the CICU is not permitted.

Phone Calls

If possible it is advisable to arrange for a friend or a relative to receive phone enquiries on your behalf. This will lessen the time you spend taking enquiries whilst your child is in hospital and the information your family and friends receive is at your discretion.

Expressing Room

This room is available for mothers to express breast milk. The room is equipped with expressing units, storage containers. The expressed breast milk can be stored in the FORMULA/EXPRESSED MILK Freezer/Fridge in the kitchen.

Returning to C2South

Once your child is well enough they will return to C2 South, where the cardiology team will take over care of your child until they can be discharged.

Your child may still have some intravenous tubes attached and may also require some oxygen therapy.

On the ward, as parents / guardians, you are able to be with your child as much as you like, but overnight, due to limited accommodation on the ward, we are only able to accommodate one parent on the ward. General visiting hours, for friends and families, is between 8am and 8pm 7 days per week.

Lactation Consultant

There is a lactation consultant available for breast-feeding mothers.

Social Worker

A social worker is available for parents to assist with any issues that are not medical or nursing. Please ask the nursing staff to put you in contact at any time.

Chaplain

There is a chaplaincy service available for all patients and families in the hospital.

If you have any questions please ask one of the nursing staff on the ward.