The Mission of Catholic Health Initiatives is to nurture the healing ministry of the Church by bringing it new life, energy and viability in the 21st century. Fidelity to the Gospel urges us to emphasize human dignity and social justice as we move toward the creation of healthier communities.
Family members play a vital role in the healing process for our patients. We realize having a loved one in the critical care setting can be both stressful and challenging and we want to ensure that our patients and their family members are as comfortable as possible.

The staff of the Cardiac/Trauma Surgical Intensive Care Unit (CTSICU) and the Medical Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is dedicated to providing quality compassionate care in a supportive, welcoming environment.

**This handbook will provide:**

- Information about critical care technology
- Suggestions to assist you with your loved one’s recovery
- Information to help make your time with us more comfortable
# Table of Contents

Helpful Information about CTSICU and ICU

- Technology ................................................................. 1
- Patient Interaction ..................................................... 2-3
- Patient Care Concerns .................................................. 4

Family Waiting Area ....................................................... 4

Taking Care of Yourself .................................................... 5

Telephones ........................................................................ 5

Dining Options ................................................................... 6

Staying Overnight .............................................................. 7

Wireless Internet Access .................................................... 7

Smoking and Tobacco ......................................................... 7

Volunteer Ambassadors ...................................................... 7

First Floor Map ................................................................... 8

Frequently used ICU Terminology ....................................... 9-11

Commonly Asked Questions ............................................... 12

Patient Satisfaction ............................................................ 13

Notes ............................................................................... 14
Helpful Information about CTSICU and ICU

Technology

- Many of the machines in your loved one’s room utilize alarms and lights to assist in safely monitoring patients’ condition. Even when the physician or nurse is not at the bedside, the equipment sends messages to the central monitor, as well as the eICU monitoring station. eICU is a state-of-the-art communication system that is designed to monitor ICU patients 24 hours per day using both video and remote monitoring capabilities to provide a second level of safety for your loved one.

- Cellular phones are permitted for emergency use; however, they may only be used in areas more than three feet away from any medical equipment.

- You may notice many tubes attached to the patient. These provide them with IV fluid, medication, nutrition, oxygen and drainage.

- Feel free to ask questions about what you are seeing. You will be more reassured about your loved one’s plan of care if you understand what the staff is doing.

- The staff frequently monitors the patient’s temperature and provides enough covering to prevent chilling. Staff members need to be able to see and observe the patient’s skin, but every effort is made to preserve the patient’s dignity.
Helpful Information about CTSICU and ICU

Patient Interaction

- Unit visiting times are open. Nurses and physicians may ask you to temporarily leave the room to provide patient care and/or privacy.
- Patients are awakened frequently to assess their condition. They may become sleep deprived, and this can add to the confusion they may suffer. Talk to the nurse if you have concerns.
- To minimize patient sleep loss, please schedule visiting times when the patient is awakened for assessments.
- Even if your loved one is unable to respond to you, they may be able to hear you or sense your touch. Be sure to speak to them when you visit, and touch them to reassure them of your presence. Provide encouragement and support by letting them know about all of the people who are thinking of them. This is a strong part of the healing process.
- Nursing staff typically change shifts between 7-8 a.m. and 7-8 p.m. To ensure the best possible care is provided to your loved one, the staff uses this time to relay critical information to the next shift. Please limit questions during this time.
- If the blinds or door are closed in your loved one’s room, please return to the waiting room until care is finished. To reduce congestion and to maintain confidentiality of patient information, please do not wait in the hallways or by the nursing station.
- Please designate one to two family members as spokesperson(s) who will call the unit for updates when no one is present for your family member. All phone calls should be directed to the waiting room so that the nurse can spend his or her time caring for your loved one.
• To ensure our patients’ safety, please limit the number of visitors to three or less.

• Children under the age of 10 must be under adult supervision at all times.

• We understand that visitors like to bring or send flowers and gifts to patients in the unit. Cards, silk flowers and Mylar balloons are welcome; however, live flowers or plants are not allowed due to the possibility of germ or insect contamination. If flowers or plants are delivered for a patient, we will ask a family member to take them home.

• Please do not eat or drink in the patient rooms. Your family member’s diet may be restricted and it may be frustrating to see or smell food that is not permitted. We also ask that you do not bring your loved one food or beverages without first checking with the nurse. Please check with a nurse before refilling water glasses in patient rooms, as many patients are on a fluid restriction.
Helpful Information about CTSICU and ICU

Patient Care Concerns

- Please take time to read the Mercy Patient Handbook—particularly the “Patient Rights and Responsibilities” section—that is provided to all of our patients when they are admitted. This section is important because it details your loved one’s patient rights and outlines the responsibilities of the hospital with regard to his or her patient care.

- If you have questions about your loved one’s care, please direct them to your nurse. Any concerns should be reported to a nurse, the charge nurse or the unit director.

Family Waiting Area

We ask that you help us keep the waiting areas clean and inviting. The waiting room is a public space that is often shared by many family members. Do not leave any personal items unattended.

A microwave and a refrigerator with an ice and water dispenser are available for your use in each of the waiting areas. If you use the refrigerator for storing your food, please label the containers.

A dry erase board is available in the family waiting area for friends and family members to use to communicate with one another. Computers are available to keep friends and family updated on your loved one’s condition. If you are interested in creating a website to update friends and family through journals, please visit www.caringbridge.org or you may also access the site from Mercy’s web site, http://www.mercydesmoines.org/for_visitors/caring_br.cfm.
**Taking Care of Yourself**

To be as helpful as possible to your loved one, please remember that you need to take care of yourself—including plenty of rest and good nutrition. An occasional change of scenery is sometimes needed to help clear your mind or see things more objectively, and we encourage families to go home at night to maintain their own health and energy.

A chaplain is available 24-hours a day. Let your nurse know if you wish to see a chaplain and we will contact them for you. Our Lady of Mercy Chapel is located on Level 1 of the hospital, near the main entrance. Service times are listed on TV Channel 4 as well as in the waiting areas.

If you need to speak to a social worker, therapist or other member of the health care team, please ask your nurse.

**Telephones**

Telephones are available for use in the family waiting area. We are unable to transfer phone calls into a patient’s room. To make a local call, dial “9”, followed by the phone number. To make a long-distance phone call, you must use a calling card, credit card or call the party you are trying to reach collect. Calling cards are available for purchase in the hospital gift shop, located on Level 1.

To make a long-distance phone call with a credit card, dial “9” and then dial the number on the credit card. To call collect, dial “0” and the Mercy operator will assist you. If you need a hearing-impaired TDD phone, ask your nurse to assist you.
Dining Options
Whether you are looking for a quick cup of coffee or a traditional sit-down meal, Mercy has several dining options from which to choose.

**The Marketplace & Grille (A-Level of the Main Building)**
Open daily from 6:15 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 1 to 5 a.m., the Marketplace & Grille is the hospital’s main cafeteria and offers a variety of pre-packaged, self-serve and cafeteria-style food items. Menus vary daily and are posted outside of the cafeteria’s main entrance. Hot food is served daily from 6:15 to 9:20 a.m., 10:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 4:45 to 7 p.m., and from 1 to 4 a.m. on weekdays.

**The Atrium Deli (A-Level of the Mercy Medical Plaza)**
Open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., the Atrium Deli offers a variety of soups, sandwiches, baked goods, coffee and beverages, and features daily lunch specials.

**Simply Delicious Food Cart**
Simply Delicious is a convenient service provided by Mercy’s Dietary Services. The cart stops in the East Tower visitor areas on weekdays during lunch hours to offer a variety of sack lunch options, beverages and desserts. The scheduled stop for CTSICU/ICU waiting area is 11-11:20 a.m.

**McDonald’s (A-Level of the West Building)**
Open weekdays from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. and from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends.

**Starbucks (1st Floor of the East Tower)**
Open weekdays from 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and from 7 a.m. to noon on weekends.

**Vending Services** (located on A-Level of the East Tower and outside the Marketplace & Grille).
**Staying Overnight**

If you decide to stay overnight, please register at the Information Desk located on B-Level of the East Tower. We ask that you not use the television after 10 p.m., as others in the lounge may wish to rest. In the waiting areas, there are recliners and sofas available for your use from 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. Blankets and pillows (stored in the central waiting room cupboards) are also available for use at that time. If additional linens are needed, please contact 333-7442. Linens are collected daily during cleaning. A shower facility is also available.

If you need extended stay lodging options, Mercy has partnered with the Holiday Inn Downtown, located at 1050 6th Avenue (to the immediate southwest of Mercy’s Central Campus). Discounted overnight accommodations are available for Mercy visitors. For hotel room and shuttle availability, please contact the receptionist at the information desk in the hospital’s main lobby at (515) 643-4160. After 9 p.m., contact Public Safety at (515) 247-3111.

**Wireless Internet**

“Mercy Connections” is Mercy’s wireless Internet access system for patients and visitors. It enables guests of the hospital to use their own hand-held device or laptop computer equipped with a wireless network card to access a free high-speed Internet connection. For additional information, please visit Mercy’s Web site at www.mercydesmoines.org.

**Smoking and Tobacco**

Mercy Medical Center is officially a tobacco-free campus. This means that employees, patients and visitors are prohibited from smoking or chewing tobacco in any Mercy-owned or maintained property, including facilities, grounds, parking areas and sidewalks.

**Volunteer Ambassadors**

Volunteer ambassadors are located in the waiting areas. They help create a warm and welcoming environment by orienting and directing families, maintaining basic hospitality items and assisting with general questions.
First Floor Map
Frequently Used ICU Terminology

**ABGs: (Arterial Blood Gases):** A blood test used to determine the amount of carbon dioxide and oxygen in the blood.

**Antibiotics:** Drugs used to kill or control infections caused by bacteria.

**Arrhythmias:** Irregularity of the heart’s rhythm.

**Arterial line or art line:** A special IV placed into the artery to continuously record blood pressure and to allow the sampling of blood without sticking the patient with a needle.

**Balloon pump (Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump):** A pump to assist the heart and circulation.

**Blood pressure:** Two numbers that reflect pressures in the circulatory system; the first number is systolic and the second number is the diastolic.

**Cardiovascular:** Referring to the heart and blood vessels.

**CAT scan:** A test that produces a computerized recording of internal body images to aid medical diagnosis. This test is done in the Medical Imaging Department and may be done on any part of the body.

**Chest Tube:** A tube placed in the patient’s chest cavity and hooked to suction to remove air or fluid that prevents the lungs from fully expanding.

**Coma:** A state of deep unconsciousness during which a patient cannot be aroused. There are different levels of comas.

**Culture:** A sample of blood or other body fluids tested for bacteria and other organisms.

**Dialysis:** A method of cleansing the blood when the kidneys cannot function properly.

**Drain:** A rubber or plastic tube that allows fluid, pus or blood to leave the body, usually placed during surgery.
**EEG:** A machine that produces a tracing of the electrical activity occurring in the brain to determine if it is functioning properly.

**EKG or ECG:** A machine that produces a tracing of the electrical activity of the heart to determine if the heart is functioning properly.

**Endotracheal tube (ET Tube):** A plastic tube placed through the nose or mouth into the larynx to deliver oxygen to the lungs, remove secretions from the lungs and connect the patient with a mechanical breathing device. Patients cannot talk while the ET tube is in place. To insert the tube is called intubation. To remove it is called extubation.

**Feeding Tube:** This is a medical device used to provide nutrition to patients who cannot obtain nutrition by swallowing.

**Foley catheter:** A flexible tube placed in the bladder to remove urine.

**Gastrointestinal:** Pertaining to the esophagus, stomach, large intestine and small intestine.

**Infection:** Invasion of the body by bacteria or viruses.

**Isolation:** Keeping patients who have communicable diseases or who are at risk for acquiring infections separate from other patients.

**IV (Intravenous):** A small plastic tube placed into a patient’s vein to deliver fluid and medication.

**Lab tests:** Tests done on urine, blood and other tissues and bodily fluids to help determine how best to treat a patient.

**Living will:** A document written by a competent adult that instructs physicians to withdraw or withhold life-sustaining procedures when these efforts serve no purpose except to delay the moment of death.

**Myocardial infarction (MI):** A heart attack.

**Nasal cannula:** A small plastic tube placed near the nostrils to deliver extra oxygen to a patient.
Neurologic: Having to do with the brain or spinal cord.

Orthopaedic: Having to do with the muscles or bones.

PICC line: (Peripherally inserted central catheter) This is a form of intravenous access that can be used for a prolonged period of time.

Pulmonary: Having to do with the lungs.

Renal: Having to do with the kidneys.

Ventilator (Respirator): A machine attached to an endotracheal tube or tracheostomy tube to help a patient breathe in a specific depth and pattern. The ventilator also provides a calculated amount of oxygen.

Sedation: Medications that help patients sleep or rest.

Sepsis: The presence of bacteria or other organisms in the body, which causes abnormal function of various body tissues.

Suctioning: Placing a catheter into an endotracheal tube or a tracheostomy tube to remove excess secretions.

Swan-Ganz catheter: A long catheter threaded into a vein located in the right side of the heart to measure pressure in various heart chambers and lung blood vessels.

Thrombolytics: Medications that destroy blood clots that are plugging arteries.

Tracheostomy tube (Trach Tube): A small plastic tube treaded through a hole in the patient’s neck into the windpipe. This helps a patient breathe better and keeps the lungs free of excess secretions.
Commonly Asked Questions

When will the doctor be here?
Due to different schedules and unknown emergencies, physician schedules cannot always be determined. If you have specific questions, feel free to leave them with the nurse if you cannot be here when the physician arrives. Family conferences can also be arranged with the unit’s patient care manager.

Where should I go when the nurses are working with my family member?
While providing care to your loved one, the nurses ask that you step out into the waiting area. To decrease congestion and maintain the privacy of our other patients and their family members, please do not stand in the hallway.

When is the best time to call and talk to a nurse about my loved one?
Feel free to contact your nurse anytime throughout the day, excluding shift changes, which occur from 7-8 a.m. and 7-8 p.m. During shift changes, the nurses are providing the next shift with vital information about your loved one. Please note, phone calls cannot be transferred into the patient rooms. Also, please keep in mind that because of patient confidentiality, the nurse or secretary can only provide minimal amount of information by phone. We also suggest that you appoint a family spokesperson that will be responsible for gathering all of the information about your loved one and relaying it to other family members.

Where can I use my cell phone?
Please limit cellular phone use in the Intensive Care Unit and Cardiac Trauma Surgical Intensive Care Unit. Cellular phones are permitted for emergency use; however, they may only be used in areas more than three feet away from any medical equipment.
Patient Satisfaction

We hope we exceed your expectations during your loved one’s hospitalization and welcome your questions and comments. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make your loved one’s stay more comfortable.

You will receive a critical care patient satisfaction survey to complete when your loved one is being transferred from the unit. We also encourage you to use the suggestion boxes located in the waiting areas.