Family and Visitor Guide

Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU)
4th Floor, Cardinal Carter North

Hospital Number
416-864-6060

CVICU Direct Line
416-864-5483
Our goal

Our goal in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU) is to give patients and their families the best care after heart and vascular surgery.

About our team

A team of healthcare professionals will manage the care of your family member after surgery. This team includes doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and respiratory therapists who are trained to care for patients after heart and vascular surgery. It also includes other professionals, depending on the needs of your family member.

The surgeon who operated on your family member will speak to you after the surgery. In the CVICU, different doctors and the nurse practitioner will care for your family member. The staff doctors change weekly.

Feel free to ask team members to explain their role.
What to expect

1. On the day of surgery, you can wait for your family member in the ICU family lounge. The lounge is on the 4th floor of the Cardinal Carter Wing directly across from the CVICU. Take the Cardinal Carter North elevator.

2. The surgeon will speak to you after the surgery is done. It takes some time to settle your family member into the CVICU. You may have to wait for up to 1 hour before you visit your family member.

3. The nurse at the bedside will tell you about your family member’s condition. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have. The nurse will ask you to name a contact person. This person will call us or take phone calls from us. They can let family or friends know how your family member is doing.

4. The health care team will decide when it is safe for your family member to transfer to the inpatient unit. The Cardiac and Vascular Surgery Inpatient Unit is on the 7th floor, Cardinal Carter Wing (North elevator). Most patients are transferred out of the CVICU the day after surgery.
Sometimes a patient may need to stay in the CVICU longer for close monitoring and care. If this happens, the health care team will explain the reason why your family member is staying in the CVICU.

**Visiting your family member**

- Speak with the volunteer in the ICU family lounge about visiting your family member. If the volunteer is not there, pick up the phone labeled CVICU to speak with staff before coming in to visit.

- Do not visit if you are feeling sick, have a fever or cough, diarrhea or vomiting. This is for the safety of our patients.

- Clean your hands before entering the unit and after you leave your family member’s bedside. Hand sanitizer is available at the bedside and at the entrance of the CVICU.

- We ask that only immediate family visit - 2 visitors at a time. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult. If someone outside the family wants to visit, please discuss it with the nurse at the bedside.
• We recommend short, frequent visits. It is important for both patients and visitors to get enough rest. Sleep is an important part of the healing process. Patients are usually bathed in the evening and encouraged to sleep.

• Visitors may be asked to leave if a patient is having a test or procedure.

While you wait

• The ICU family lounge is a shared space for families of patients in the ICU. Please respect the needs of other families and be considerate in how you share the space.

• The family lounge has a TV, computer, magazines and lockers. If the volunteer is on duty, there is coffee and cookies.

• Wifi is available. Search under wifi/internet settings, select “Other” and enter SMH_Guest. No password is needed.

• Do not leave your valuables unattended in the family lounge. There are lockers you can use in the lounge. Please bring your own lock or you can buy one from the gift shop.
When to visit

General hospital visiting hours are from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. You may also visit patients in the CVICU outside of these hours. Please speak to your family member’s nurse.

Avoid visits between 7 to 8 a.m. and 7 to 8 p.m.
At these times the nurses give information about your family member to the next nurse who will be caring for them. We ask you not to call or visit during these hours.

After 9 p.m.
We recommend that you go home at the end of the day to rest. If you would like to stay in the hospital after 9 p.m., please speak to your family member’s nurse. You will need to sign into the Visitor’s Log at the nursing station and get a visitor’s badge. Please wear it at all times. Keep your name and the date clearly visible.

If you are entering the hospital after 9 p.m., please go to the Queen Street Security Officer. Security will call the CVICU to ask if you can visit. You will get a visitor’s badge to wear.
Inside the CVICU

The CVICU is a busy place. It is also an open environment where you will see other patients. Be prepared to see lots of wires, tubes and equipment. Please respect the privacy of other patients and families.

Monitors

Monitors have alarms that signal the nurse when something needs to be checked. Alarms are not always cause for concern. Sometimes even a patient’s slight movement may sound an alarm.

Oxygen

Patients in the CVICU often need extra oxygen. It may be given through a ventilator, face mask, or tubes through the nose.

Ventilator

A ventilator is a machine that helps a person to breathe. A breathing tube goes in through the person’s mouth and down their trachea (windpipe). When a breathing tube is in, a person cannot speak, drink or eat.
Your family member may have a breathing tube and be connected to the ventilator when they move from the operating room to CVICU. We work on getting the breathing tube out as soon as possible.

**IV Lines, Tubes and Drains**

Your family member will have IV (intravenous) lines, tubes and drains in place. Some IV lines provide fluid and medicine. Others measure blood or heart pressure.

**Changes you may notice**

After a person has surgery, their skin is usually pale and may be cool or clammy. Your family member may look puffy and swollen, especially the face, hands, and feet.

Patients often show some signs of delirium after surgery. Delirium is sudden confusion that causes changes in how a person behaves and thinks. Patients are screened for delirium and treated if needed. For more information, talk to a member of the healthcare team.
Belongings and valuables

Please take your family member’s personal belongings home. St. Michael’s Hospital is not responsible for lost or stolen belongings. We are also not able to store belongings on the unit.

Cell phones

Cell phone use is limited to texting only within the ICU. No phone calls. Do not take pictures in the ICU for reasons of confidentiality.

We want to hear from you

Please let us know how you feel about your experience with CVICU by completing the survey. The survey is available from staff and volunteers. It is confidential – you do not need to include your name. Please return the survey to the mailbox in the visitors lounge.
If you have any concerns about your family member’s care, speak to a member of the healthcare team or ask to speak to the manager. You can also contact our Patient Relations office to make a complaint or send your compliments.

**Patient Relations**
1st floor, Donnelly Wing, Room 1-021
Phone: 416-864-5215
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
St. Michael’s cares about your health. For reliable health information, visit our Patient and Family Learning Centre, Room 6-004, 6th floor, Cardinal Carter Wing), or find us online at www.stmichaelshospital.com/learn

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.

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