

What if I have further concerns or questions?

If you need more help and advice, please do not hesitate to contact the Critical Care unit you stayed on.

- Critical Care, Kent and Canterbury Hospital Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 78 31 04
- Critical Care, William Harvey Hospital Ashford
Telephone: 01233 61 61 14
- Critical Care, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital Margate
Telephone: 01843 23 44 15 or
Telephone: 01843 23 50 54
- Lucy Mummery
Critical Care Follow-Up and Rehabilitation Sister
Mobile: 07771 37 83 31
Email: lucymummery@nhs.net

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patientinformation

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Your recovery after your time in Critical Care

Information for patients

Everyone's time in Critical Care is different, and it can be helpful to talk to someone, such as the Critical Care Follow-up Team who will visit you once you are on the ward.

You were unconscious or sedated while in Critical Care, so you may find it difficult to remember what happened to you. You may also have or have had vivid dreams, nightmares, or hallucinations, which can seem real and very frightening. These are nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about, and are normal for someone who has been critically ill.



How has my body been physically affected by critical illness?

Due to the prolonged period of inactivity whilst you were ill, your muscles will have lost strength. Do not be surprised if you feel weak and tired to start with. Even the simplest of tasks may feel difficult. Do not be afraid to ask for help.

Other common affects

- **Changes to hearing, taste, touch, and smell.** This is usually temporary and should return to normal over time.
- **Dry and itchy skin.** Using moisturising cream regularly can help with this.
- Changes to the **condition of your hair.** It is not unusual to have some hair loss, but this should recover and hair usually grows back in time.
- **Poor sleep patterns.** It can take time to return to your normal sleep routine.

How might I feel after a critical illness?

Everyone feels differently about their time in Critical Care. You may have no clear memory of it, or you may try to forget it. For some it can take time to come to terms with their experience.

You may feel:

- tearful
- low in mood
- quick tempered
- scared
- anxious.

And you may have:

- lost some self confidence
- poor understanding of what has happened to you
- a lack of concentration
- impaired short-term memory
- worries about when it is safe to start having sex again
- impotence (an inability to get and keep an erection firm enough for sex).

These feelings are nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about, and are normal for someone who has been critically ill.

What happens when I leave hospital?

Leaving hospital and returning home is a major step in your recovery. It is a very positive step, but it will take time and effort to get back to a normal life.

Once at home you will be contacted and supported, and be invited to join out virtual **Critical Care Follow-Up Rehabilitation Group.**

Being part of this group involves having an assessment, followed by a weekly one hour virtual class for 12 weeks. These classes are run by members of the Critical Care Nursing and Physiotherapy Team. It involves 30 minutes of exercise, followed by 30 minutes of education each week.

The aim of the class is to provide an informal relaxed place, where you are encouraged to speak about your time in Critical Care. It also aims to give you the opportunity to improve how you feel physically, and discuss any ongoing issues you may have had since your discharge home.

If the rehabilitation group is not for you, we can still offer you ongoing telephone support, escorted return visits to Critical Care can be arranged, and a timeline of what happened to you during your stay can be written.