

KEEPING PATIENT DIARIES



**Information
for relatives**

KEEPING PATIENT DIARIES

Patients who have had a stay in ICU often have little or no memory of their ICU stay. Their memory for this time can be affected by the illness itself or the sedative drugs we give to our patients to keep them comfortable. Patients may also remember nightmares or hallucinations from this time that can be very frightening.

Although doctors and nurses explain to patients why they were admitted to ICU, patients often forget what we have told them. Research has suggested that patients can become stressed and anxious when they do not fully understand what has been wrong with them. To help patients understand more about their illness and ICU stay the staff have introduced patient diaries. A diary has been shown to reduce stress in patients after they are discharged to the wards and in the months after their stay.

We will start a patient diary for your relative after you sign the consent and acceptance form. The nursing staff will make diary entries to explain what has brought the patient to CTCCU, what is wrong with them and how they are progressing.

We encourage you to write in the diary, to pass on your messages to the patient or to tell them news from home that they would like to hear. Examples would be, family milestones, information regarding patient's interests, like their favourite sports and current events, your visits to CTCCU or any special message to the patient.

When writing in the diary please avoid using any language that could cause offence, to the patient or others, who may read the diary afterwards.

The diary will be kept at the bedside in CTCCU; you just need to ask the nurse looking after your relative if you would like to make a diary entry.

When our patients are well enough and ready to be discharged

from CTCCU we will either give the diary to the patient or to their next-of-kin for safekeeping.

If the patient is not well enough to take the diary, and their next-of-kin is not around at the time of discharge, we will put the diary in a sealed envelope and put it in the patient's property bag.

If the diary is left behind on CTCCU following the patient's discharge we will keep it safe until it can be collected.

Diaries not collected after 12 months are destroyed.

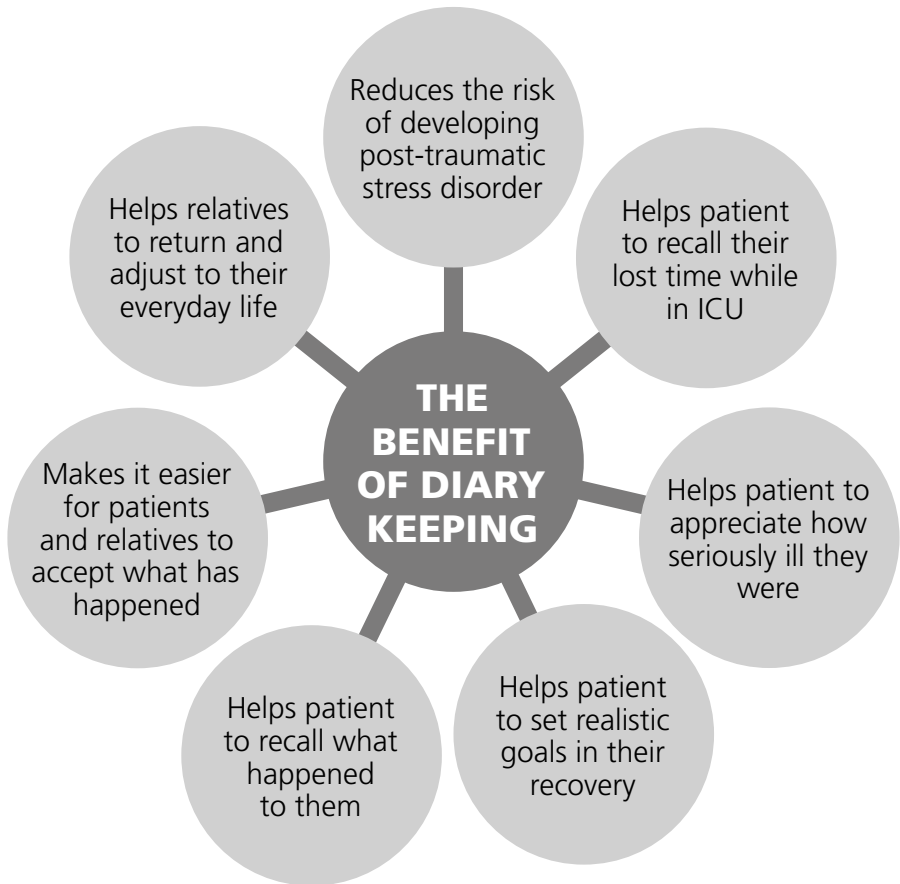
Once well enough, we encourage patients to read their diaries with their loved ones. Please also remember to bring the diary to follow-up appointments.

REMEMBER: THE DIARY IS THE PATIENT'S PROPERTY.

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THE DIARY AWAY FROM THE BEDSIDE.

If you have any questions about patient diaries, please ask the nurse looking after your relative.

Thank you,
CTCCU staff



WHAT PATIENTS SAY

“I have lost eight days of my life, but being able to look back through my diary has been a tremendous help.”

“The nursing staff wrote in the diary how they turned and washed me and looked after me. My family wrote a message like **‘Keep up the fight mum’**. Even my older grandchildren wrote in the diary.”

“A year on, I feel fantastic and very, very lucky to be alive and I am able to look back through my diary and see who visited me in ICU and how the staff looked after me.”

WHAT YOU CAN WRITE IN THE PATIENT DIARY

“We write down any significant events, like extubation, tracheostomy procedure, and sitting out of bed for the first time.”

ICU nurse

“We wrote about our feelings, the latest football results or news from family.”

Relative

“Sometimes the patient’s grandchildren draw photos or write letters to put in the diary.”

ICU nurse

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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November 2016
Review: November 2019
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