

Introduction to the

Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Unit

This booklet is to give you and your family some key information about your spinal cord injury.

In the early stages after injury, it can often be difficult to take on new information. We do not expect you to learn everything that is in this booklet, but with time, you may find it a useful resource.

We would encourage you and your family to read through the booklet to familiarise yourselves with some of the issues relating to your spinal cord injury.

While this booklet will try to answer many of the questions you may have about spinal cord injury, there may be some issues that are not addressed. If you have any questions about your spinal cord injury please ask the staff.

The Unit has two wards: Edenhall and Philipshill as well as an outpatient department.

During your stay you will meet several members of the ward team. This includes:

- Medical Staff
- Nursing Staff
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Clinical Psychologists
- Community Liaison Nurses
- Dietitians
- Education Sister

Edenhall

We admit all new patients to this 12 bed high dependency ward. The priority is to medically stabilise patients.

There are more nurses in this ward as this is a specialised ward.

You will have a medical consultant and they monitor you throughout your stay. Your consultant will meet with you and your family to discuss your situation. You will also be able to speak with your consultant at any point during your stay in the unit.

Some people need medical machinery to help them in the very early stages. Some may need breathing support. This can often be quite daunting but please ask the staff to explain what the machines are doing.

The first few weeks

When we damage the spine, we tend to have fractured the bones in the back. The doctors may decide to let the bones heal by themselves. This often means being on bed rest. People can be on bed rest for up to 12 weeks but the exact length of time depends on the nature of the fractures.

Whilst on bed rest, you will need nursing support to manage your bodily functions such as bowel and bladder function. With time, you will require less support and many will regain independence.

The length of stay in Edenhall depends on medical factors and whether you are ready for rehabilitation.

Medical Staff

The Unit has 3 spinal injury consultants:

- Dr McLean
- Mr Fraser
- Dr Purcell

The unit also has a specialist in spinal injury, Dr Jigajinni.

You will have a named Consultant overseeing your care while in the unit. If they are not in the unit on a particular day, one of the other consultants will look after you.

The unit also has a range of other doctors, neurosurgeons, and specialists.

Ward Rounds

While on Edenhall, you will see the doctors twice a day during the ward rounds. These happen at 9 am and 4 pm.

The main aim of the ward round is to monitor your health and make sure you are making progress.

There are larger ward rounds on Mondays which let the whole rehabilitation team evaluate and discuss your progress. There may be up to 11 people in these rounds.

The rehabilitation team will discuss a range of issues while at your bedside. While the ward round only spends a brief time with you, your consultant will offer a summary of what has been discussed with the rehab team and tell you of any new plans.

You can discuss any concerns with the doctors during the ward rounds or you can arrange a separate time to meet with your consultant.

Moving from Edenhall to Philipshill

When you are ready we will move you from Edenhall to Philipshill Ward. We will plan this move in advance and discuss this with you and your family. In some cases we may have to move you quickly due to other emergency admissions but we try to avoid this.

It is common to be stressed at this stage in your recovery and the thought of further change can be unsettling.

Philipshill and Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a process that you go through to regain maximum independence. On average, patients are in rehabilitation for 4 months. However, this may vary from 1 month to 9 months depending on your circumstances.

We hold Goal Planning Meetings approximately every 4 weeks to review your progress and set new goals. You will attend these goal planning meetings with your rehabilitation team, and your family are welcome to attend too.

By this stage the focus moves from medical stabilisation to rehabilitation, therefore your consultant may not attend these meetings.

Rehabilitation Staff

During your time in rehabilitation, you will spend many hours working with physiotherapists and occupational therapists as you gradually increase your independence.

At this stage, you will start to become more independent, therefore, the nurses will encourage you to do more everyday activities on your own.

It is also the norm to meet with the clinical psychologist during your stay. As well as focusing on your physical recovery, it is important to acknowledge how you feel emotionally.

Your family can also meet with the psychologist as it is very common for them to experience emotional distress at this time.

Any questions



Please remember that if you have any questions please ask the staff.