



Patient & Family Guide
2018

Palliative Care Unit (PCU)

Centennial Building,
Victoria General Site



www.nshealth.ca

Welcome to 7A Palliative Care Unit (PCU)

What is palliative care?

- Palliative care enhances the quality of life of people with life-limiting illnesses by preventing and relieving suffering. It also helps family members cope during a loved one's illness and death, and during the grief process.
- Palliative care provides:
 - › relief from pain and other symptoms
 - › emotional and spiritual care
 - › end-of-life care
- It is important to know that palliative care does not hurry or delay death. It helps people live as actively as possible until their death.

About 7A PCU

- The PCU includes private rooms and semi-private rooms.
- Each room has a dresser and bedside table for you to use for your clothing and belongings.
- Each room has free TV service.
- We also have a bulletin board and encourage you to put up cards or pictures to help you feel more at home.
- Each room has a whiteboard that you, your family and your health care team can use to communicate.
- There are 2 family rooms on the unit for you and your family. Many people use these rooms for quiet time, watching TV, visiting with family, or for special family gatherings.
- There is a kitchen with a microwave and stove that your family is welcome to use. If you or your family bring food in, please label it with your name and the date, and place it in the fridge.
- There are 2 public washrooms, one beside the kitchen and one beside the small family room.

What is a normal day like on 7A PCU?

- **7 a.m.** - Day nursing staff arrive
- **7:30-8:30 a.m.** - The team will:
 - › check on you
 - › update your whiteboard for the day
 - › help you with breakfast
 - › bring you your morning medications
- **After breakfast** - If you are ready, the team will help you wash. They will tell you if you have any tests or procedures planned that day
- **Late morning to early afternoon** - Doctors and medical students will check on you
- **Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.** - Other members of your health care team (such as physiotherapists or music therapists) are available

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Extra comforts

- Some patients are able to leave their room for a shower or tub bath. If this interests you, please talk with your health care team.
- We have extra pajamas, soft pillowcases, and quilts available. If your family would like to stay overnight, please ask your nurse for a cot. If no cot is available, we will do our best to accommodate you in another way.
- Please talk with your health care team if you have a pet that you would like to have visit.
- A service dog visits the unit throughout the week. Please let us know if you would like a visit.

The Sunshine Room

- The Sunshine Room is a haven for patients and their families to relax in a non-medical environment. It is on the 7th floor of the Centennial Building.
- Patients can visit the Sunshine Room for free therapeutic treatments, including:
 - › reiki
 - › massage therapy
 - › reflexology
 - › healing touch
 - › therapeutic touch

- Free haircuts and wigs are available. For more information, visit:
 - › www.nshealth.ca/content/patient-and-family-comfort-rooms

When can my friends and family visit?

- 7A PCU has an open visitor policy. There are no restrictions on when friends and family can come, or on how long they can stay.
- However, some patients find it tiring to have many visitors or long visits. Your health care team can help you find a plan that works best for you and communicate your preferences to your loved ones.

Who is on my health care team?

Throughout your stay you will see many health care professionals. All staff on the unit work together as a team.

Nursing and care staff

- On a typical day, there are 3 nursing staff and a Care Team Assistant on the PCU. You will have one primary nurse assigned to you and may also have a Care Team Assistant helping with your care.
- You may have different nurses answering your call bell or helping you throughout the day.

Doctors

- One staff doctor and a senior medical student or resident will be responsible for your medical care. They work together with all of the other team members to find the best plan of care for you.
- The staff doctor changes about every 2 weeks, so you may meet different doctors. When the doctors change, they are given an update about your time in hospital and decision making.
- Doctors usually see each patient once per day. If your family members are not there when the doctor sees you, you can ask that the doctor meet with them at another time to talk about your care.
- A palliative doctor and a resident see each patient over the weekend to address unexpected issues. Planning for discharge usually happens on weekdays.
- A doctor is on call for emergencies at all times.

Volunteers

- Trained palliative care volunteers provide comfort and support to enhance the quality of life of patients, families, and caregivers.
- Volunteers complement the work of the health care team by responding to physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs.

Social workers

- Social workers support the psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social health as a whole for patients and their families.
- Services include psycho/social/spiritual counselling, system navigation, resource mobilization, and patient/family advocacy.
- Palliative social workers are available on the PCU and in the community.

Bereavement Program

- Services include individual and family counselling, bereavement support groups, memorial services, and grief education.
- Ask PCU staff to connect you with the Bereavement Coordinator to access services.

Program clerk

- The program clerk at the front desk helps keep the unit running by answering phones and questions, and making sure that paperwork is in order.
- They can point you in the right direction if you are looking for something, or help you find the best person to address your questions or concerns.

Physiotherapist (PT)

- The PT assesses and treats patients with actual or possible impairments, pain, functional limitations, or disabilities.
- On the PCU, the PT focuses on patients' wishes and quality of life improvements. Physiotherapy may include walking, breathing exercises, and moving out of bed to a chair or wheelchair, as well as discharge planning to safely get patients back home.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

- OTs work with patients and families to support patients in taking part in activities they find meaningful.
- OTs can identify and arrange for equipment needs both in hospital and at home to support patients' functional goals. This equipment may include wheelchairs, hospital beds, bathroom equipment and more.

Spiritual Care

- Chaplains provide emotional and spiritual support to patients and families of any ethnic or religious background, as well as those who do not identify with a religious practice.
- If you feel that you may benefit from Spiritual Care, ask a member of your health care team about seeing a Chaplain.
- You may also contact Spiritual Care directly:
 - › Phone: 902-473-3449
 - › Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Music Therapist

- Music therapy is offered to all patients and families on the unit. A certified music therapist can play your favourite songs or relaxing music on a harp or guitar. Sessions can be as long or as short as you like.
- Many patients find that music therapy helps with pain control, relaxation, reminiscing with loved ones, processing what is happening, spiritual support, and improving mood.

Continuing Care Coordinator

- The Continuing Care Coordinator helps you and your family if you are discharged home or go to another facility. They help to coordinate the supports that you need for a safe and successful plan when you leave the PCU.

Unit aide

- The unit aide makes sure that the unit is well stocked with supplies.
- They may also answer when you ring your call bell, and then get the appropriate member of your health care team.

Dietary staff

- Dietary staff bring you your meals, usually around 8:30 a.m., noon, and 4:30 p.m.
- Please tell your health care team if you have special needs or requests.

Housekeeping

- Housekeeping staff make sure that the unit is clean. They will clean your room and empty your garbage every day.
- Please feel free to tell them if you would prefer that they come back later for any reason.

Interpreters

- Interpreter services are available for patients, family, and staff. If you need an interpreter, please ask your nurse.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

**In Nova Scotia you can call 811 to talk with
a registered nurse about your health care
questions 24/7.**

Helpful hints

Patient feedback

- If you have feedback for our team, please ask PCU staff for a comment form.
- You may also contact NSHA about your health care experience at:
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177
 - › Email: healthcareexperience@nshealth.ca

Important phone numbers

- › Palliative Care Manager: 902-473-7776
- › Unit Phone Number: 902-473-3119
- › Patient Switchboard: 902-473-1510

Wi-Fi

- Free public Wi-Fi is available in certain parts of the hospital.
- Please tell staff if you are having trouble connecting and we will do our best to help you.

Parking

- There is a fee for parking in the VG site lot. Please refer to the posted parking rates for hourly/daily rate information.
- Special rates are available for family members of long-term inpatients after 2 weeks. Please ask at the PCU nursing station for more information.

Cafeteria

- Victoria Building
 - › Main floor
 - › 6:30 a.m.-1 a.m. every day

Resource:

Preparing for Death and Dying: A Guide for People with Life-Limiting Illness, Their Families and Their Friends:

www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/preparing_for_death_and_dying_nsha.pdf

