



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# The Acute Medical Unit (AMU)

at the Royal Sussex County Hospital

Patient information

## What is this information about?

This information is about the Acute Medical Unit (AMU) at the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

### It explains:

- what AMU/SDEC is
- the types of care you may receive in the unit
- the benefits of having your health condition checked and treated in the unit
- how you may be sent (referred)
- what happens when you arrive
- what to expect from your stay, including what checks you may need and what may happen if you need treatment
- how long you may need to stay
- what may happen if you need further checks or treatment after you leave the unit.

## Why have I been given this information?

You (or someone who is a relative or carer) have been given this information because you have been referred (sent) to the AMU.

### This may have been by:

- the Emergency Department (A&E)
- your GP or another primary care service
- another hospital ward. This may be to speed-up your discharge from hospital.

### **Please be aware,**

the AMU is not a 'walk-in' service. You must be referred and admitted before you can be assessed or treated here.

We understand that coming into hospital can make you feel anxious and unsure. Reading this information will help you to know what to expect from your care here and what may happen afterwards.

Our friendly team will support you throughout your time with us.

## What is the Acute Medical Unit?

The Acute Medical Unit (AMU) is a special area of the hospital where people can be sent to:

- have their health condition checked (assessed)
- have investigations, this might be, for example, a blood test or a scan
- have treatment or care that they need straight away for urgent medical conditions.

We work together to get you well and home sooner.

### The unit has:

- an area where we can check how you are and access your medical needs.
- an **ambulatory area** (with trolleys and chairs) where we can give you any treatment that you need while you are here. This is known as the Medical Same Day Emergency Care unit (Medical SDEC).
- its own doctors, nurses and admin staff. They can also call on other specialist teams to help them with your care.

## What are the benefits of the Acute Medical Unit?

People who are cared for in the AMU have their health condition checked on the same day that they come into hospital. This is done quickly by a senior clinician (such as a doctor or nurse).

### **This means:**

- we can start any treatment that you need as soon as possible
- you start your recovery as soon as possible
- you can go back home if that is safe for you.

This way of doing things means that your experience in hospital should be better and more comfortable. People are usually seen, treated and sent home quickly and safely when they are cared for in this way.

## How long may I need to stay in the AMU for?

- This will depend on the care and treatment that you need.
- Please allow a minimum of 4 hours for your time with us. Some people need further care after this time. If you need further care you may go to another ward to have it.

## What should I do if my condition gets worse before I have my appointment at the AMU?

**Contact your GP surgery or call 111 for advice.**

## Where is the AMU?

### Acute Medical Unit (AMU)

Level 5, Millennium Wing  
Royal Sussex County Hospital  
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

**01273 696955 Ext. 62539**

## What can I expect when I visit?

### Please be aware:

- Patients come to the AMU with different medical needs and from different places (such as their GP or A&E). Some need to be seen by a senior clinician (senior doctor or nurse) more urgently than others. Because of this people are often not seen in the order in which they arrive on the unit.
- We will check how you are soon after you arrive on the unit. If you seem to be more unwell or need urgent care, we will give you priority for an appointment with a senior clinician sooner.
- **Waiting.** If you receive a time slot, this is an **arrival time**, it is not the time you will be seen by a doctor. We aim to keep waiting times as short as possible, but you may have a wait to have tests, get test results or have treatments.
- If we can, we will schedule these so that you can have some time away from the unit. **Do** please let us know if you are leaving the unit.
- Your clinician or nurse will check often to see if your test results are ready. Please tell your nurse if you have been waiting a long time.

## When you arrive at the AMU/SDEC

- Please report to the reception. A member of staff will:
  - introduce themselves and tell you things you need to know about the unit.
  - confirm your details (such as your name, address and date of birth) and check you in.
- **Checking how you are** (assessing your condition).  
A nurse will do some basic checks on how you are by measuring things such as your blood pressure, heart rate and how much oxygen you have in your blood.  
You may also have blood tests.

## Tests (investigations) to help diagnose your condition

### You may need diagnostic tests such as:

- X-ray
- CT scan
- MRI scan
- Ultrasound scan.

Staff will arrange for you to have these if you need them. You may need to come back into hospital on another day for some of them.

## What happens if I need treatment?

Once we have your test results the AMU team will create a treatment plan for you. Your treatment will usually start on the unit. This may include you having a medical procedure.

### If you need a procedure:

- it is likely to be done on the AMU
- you may be moved from the chair area to the trolley area if this is best for your condition and the procedure that you will be having. If you do not need to move to the trolley area you will stay in the chaired area.

Some treatments that you might have in the AMU mean that you will need to have a follow-up appointment in the Medical Same Day Emergency Care unit.

## Can I have relatives with me or have visitors while I am in the AMU?

No. Many people are brought to their appointment by a friend or relative, but they cannot usually stay with you or visit you in the unit. This is because we do not have enough space in the unit for them.

The chaired area is for patients only.

### This helps to:

- reduce the chance that people may get an infection on the unit
- make sure there is enough space for patients to be cared for safely.

If you need someone to be with you while you are in the AMU, please speak with a member of staff.

If you are moved to the trolley area for further checks or tests, we may allow **one visitor** to go with you.

**Please be aware,**  
children are not allowed on the unit. It is for the treatment of adults only. If you have concerns around this, please speak with the nurse in charge.

## Where can my relatives wait for me while I am in the AMU?

Your relatives can wait for you in:

- the large seating area on the ground floor of the Louisa Martindale Building
- the smaller waiting area on level 6 of the Millennium Building.

## Where can I or my friends and relatives get food and drinks in the hospital?

The things that you need to make tea and coffee are available in the waiting area.

You can buy food and drinks in the hospital at:

- The Royal Voluntary Service coffee shop in the Children's Hospital foyer.
- A sandwich shop opposite the Children's Hospital foyer.
- The Royal Voluntary Service shop on Level 5 in the Thomas Kemp Tower.
- Level 1 in the Louisa Martindale Building.

## What happens when my care in the AMU is complete and I can go home?

Once your care is complete, you can go home. We will tell you what time you are likely to be able to go home (your discharge time).

You will need to make your own way home or arrange for someone to collect you.

Before you leave, staff will explain the next steps. These may include returning for further treatment or further checks on how you are.

Some people may need to stay in a hospital ward (be admitted to a ward) for some of their care. If you need this, the AMU team will talk with you about this and make arrangements for it.

## What things must I check, and have done, before I leave the AMU to go home?

Before you leave the AMU to go home, please **do**:

- collect any medicines or have a plan to collect them
  - **make sure that:**
    - you know the date, time and place of any appointments that you need to return for
    - you understand your ongoing care plan.
- For example, if you have a follow-up appointment with your GP and what to do if you become unwell.

## What will you do to protect my privacy and dignity while I am in the AMU?

Male and female people are treated in the same areas.

We will always protect your privacy and dignity.

- We will not ask you to wear a hospital gown unless you need to for tests or treatment
- We can provide a chaperone to be with you while you have checks or treatment. Please speak to your nurse if you would like to ask for a chaperone.

## How can I give feedback about my experience in the AMU?

We value your feedback. We will give you a questionnaire to complete and hand in at reception before you leave.

If you are unhappy with anything about your care, please speak to the Nurse in Charge.

If you prefer, you can contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

### **PALS**

**01273 696955 Ext. 64511 or 64973**

**[uhsussex.pals@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.pals@nhs.net)**



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in St Richard's Hospital and Worthing Hospital.

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