

**Birmingham Children's Hospital  
NHS Trust**



# **THE LIVER UNIT**

**Preparing for Admission:  
A leaflet for Parents and Children**

## **WELCOME TO WARD 8**

We would like to welcome you to Ward 8, where the Liver Unit at Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH) is based.

On the morning of your child's admission please contact Ward 8 on 0121 333 9065 to check bed availability.

We realize that many of you may be far from home and we shall do our best to help and support you while you are here.

In order for us to best care for you and your child during your stay it is important that we work together, so please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

We are here to help!

### **INTRODUCTION**

Your child has been referred to the Liver Unit by your local paediatrician for further assessment of a disease affecting the liver or bowel. The aim of this leaflet is to explain the reasons for this admission and what you can expect when you arrive.

Most conditions will respond to the right medical or surgical treatment, but sometimes the disease may require a transplant of the liver or bowel or both.

The reason why you have come here is because our centre is one of only three in the UK to carry out special investigations and treatment for these diseases in children.

We are also the only centre in the UK to carry out small bowel transplants in children and so the demand for beds is very high.



We do our best to admit children as soon as possible, but because we prioritize admissions according to urgency, your child may have had to wait some time before being admitted.

We have asked your local medical team for all available information on your child and have been in contact with them regularly. We may have already provided advice for investigations or treatment.

A ward nurse and doctor will meet you on your admission to the ward. They will assess your child's immediate medical needs and start appropriate treatment, if necessary.

They will also explain about Ward 8 and its facilities. We will provide you with more information about the ward when you arrive.

You will also meet our liaison nurses who will act as a go-between between yourself and your child and the medical team. A member of the liaison team will meet you in the first 24 hours of your stay (Monday – Friday). They will update you with the investigation and treatment plans for your child and supplement the daily information given by the ward nurses and the medical team. They will also convey your concerns or questions to the team on your behalf.

## **WHY DOES YOUR CHILD NEED ADMISSION?**

Your child's admission is for a disease assessment. During your admission you will meet the Liver Unit team, which comprises of doctors, surgeons, nurses, dieticians, physiotherapists, a clinical psychologist, social workers, play specialists and a teacher. You may meet other specialist teams from within the hospital. For example gastroenterology, respiratory, cardiology, renal, endocrinology and neurology teams.

If your child requires an operation you will also meet the anaesthetist and possibly the pain specialist team.

Depending on what we find after investigation we may advise a course of treatment, surgery, or assessment for transplantation.

If possible we will arrange for medical treatment to be carried out in your local hospital or at home, but most treatment needs to start or take place at BCH.

### **WHO WILL GIVE YOU INFORMATION?**

Your main source of information will be the named nurse for your child and the doctors who come and see your child daily.

The liaison nurse will discuss the risks, indications, benefits of the treatment options. Written information will be provided and if necessary the information can be recorded on tape.

You will have the opportunity to meet with your named consultant and with other senior members of the team to discuss all the treatment options for your child.

There is always a Liver Unit Consultant (Medical and Surgical) on call 24 hours. The Consultants take it in turns to be available for all inpatients. Your child's acute needs will be managed by the Liver Unit Consultant on call, but your named Consultant will provide outpatient care and long term care.

### **HOW LONG WILL THE ADMISSION BE?**

We can only answer this when the initial assessment is completed. It is possible that further treatment may be necessary and the admission may be extended longer.

We will try to keep the admission as short as possible.

## **WHICH INVESTIGATIONS WILL BE PERFORMED?**

We usually do tests on

- blood
- urine
- stools and
- ultrasound scan of the abdomen

Other tests and assessments may include

- further X-rays
- special scans where a marker is injected into the blood and its uptake by the liver is measured (TBIDA)
- liver biopsy
- endoscopy
- endoscopic ultrasound scan
- cardiac assessment including ECG and Echocardiogram
- eye assessment
- neurological assessment including EEG
- developmental assessment
- nutritional assessment (See below)

You will have the opportunity to discuss what these tests/assessments involve for your child. Although your child may have had some of these tests previously in your local hospital, it may be necessary to repeat them.

## **NUTRITIONAL ASSESSMENT**

This will include meeting a dietician who will take a detailed feeding history, review your child's current feeds both enteral (bottle, meals, nasogastric tube) and parenteral i.e. intravenous. We will also take measurements to assess your child's growth. Depending on the results of the investigations the team may decide to alter your child's feeds. Any planned changes will be discussed with you and your child.

If your child is already on tube feeds please contact the liver unit dietician on 0121 333 8034 before admission so that we can arrange a supply for your child on the ward and you do not need to bring feeds with you.

If your child is on intravenous feeds your doctors should have contacted our parenteral nutrition (PN) pharmacist on 0121 333 9785 and let us know the composition of the PN. On the day of admission please make sure that your hospital provides you with 3 days supply of PN to allow our pharmacy time to prepare your child's prescription. If this cannot be arranged, your child will go on a standard paediatric PN appropriate for age and weight until a tailored prescription can be provided.

## **NURSING AND MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

If your child has been in hospital for a long time you may notice some differences in the way things are done in the Liver Unit compared to your local hospital.

While both the Ward and the Liaison team will be happy to discuss these issues with you, we are bound by the Health & Safety regulations and policies of BCH, which may be different to your own hospital policies.

Our main aim is to keep your child safe and get them home soon.

## HOUSE-KEEPING ISSUES

### ENTRY TO WARD 8

To ensure safety of the children, entry to the ward is by video access and will only be given to people who are recognized by the team. Please identify all your visitors for us. Please do not leave the door open or admit anyone you do not know personally. This is for the safety of your child and others on the ward.

### CUBICLE USE



Ward 8 is a 14-bedded ward with both cubicles and ward areas. We prioritize cubicle use for patients with infections or sensitive to infections.

### HAND WASHING

All of you will have heard of the “killer-bugs” that may cause infections in hospitals. These germs have developed due to the prolonged use of antibiotics.

A simple measure like hand washing using the soap in the dispenser provided followed by use of the alcohol rub is the most effective way to prevent hospital infections when approaching and leaving your child's bedside.

Please use the hand rub each time you enter the ward.



## SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION FOR PARENTS

We welcome your wish to stay with your child. We will do our best to ensure you are as comfortable as possible with the resources available.

We will try to provide a bed for you by your child but we can only provide a comfortable chair in the high dependency unit.



This is to ensure that there is always quick and easy access to your child should this be needed in an emergency.

There is limited parent accommodation available within the hospital at Edward's House. If you would like to request accommodation please inform the nurse looking after you on the ward when you arrive. Unfortunately, due to high demand, we are unable to arrange for family accommodation prior to your child's admission.

## KITCHEN

Kitchen facilities are available in the Parents Room  
Guidelines for its use will be  
available on admission to Ward 8.



## USE OF TELEPHONE AND MOBILE PHONES



A telephone that takes incoming calls only is situated in the corridor on the Ward. The number is 0121 333 9068. Please give this number out to family and friends. This telephone will only be answered by parents. We respectfully ask you not to expect the nursing staff to take telephone messages.

Should you wish to make a call there is a payphone outside Ward 7 along the main corridor on the same floor. You will be able to purchase pre-paid phone cards from machines next to the shop by the main entrance.

We must ask you to switch off your mobile phone before entering the ward as it may interfere with equipment.



Should you need to use your mobile phone, please leave the ward. The reception is best near the windows in the corridor or in the conservatory.

## **VISITING**

You are welcome to stay with your child at all times, but please restrict your visitors and identify them.

We ask you to respect the late evening and night times as quiet times for the children.



Many of the children on this ward are vulnerable to infections and this may be the case for your own child. Please ensure that your visitors are healthy before they come to visit.

Please keep visitors to a sensible number as the more people entering the ward the greater the risk of infection.

Please discuss your visitors with your named nurse so that we can meet the individual needs of your child and family.

If your child is in the high dependency area of the ward then we ask you to limit the numbers of visitors to 2 at a time.

## **SIBLINGS**

Brothers and sisters of your child are always very welcome as long as they have not been in contact with any infectious diseases

(e.g. chicken pox, diarrhoea and vomiting) in the previous 21 days and that they are well.

Your other children remain your responsibility. We cannot provide food and babysitting but some play activity may be available on the ward. This is run by our Nursery Nurse and Play Specialists.



We will try and explain what is wrong with your child to your other children and how we are trying to make their brother/sister better.

## **PARENTS ROOM**

There is a parents' room across the corridor. You are welcome to make yourself hot drinks in this area and to sit and relax. A TV is available in this room.



You are welcome to keep a small supply of dry food in the cupboards. All food in the fridge must be kept in closed containers. Tea and coffee and milk can be purchased at the shop. We advise you to label your goods. When your child goes home please return your food cupboard key.

Please wash and tidy up after yourself. The room will only be as tidy as the people who use it!

## **TELEVISION VIEWING ON THE WARD**

Televisions are available throughout the ward area. This is primarily for use by the children. Sound may be accessed through the headphones of the patient handset. Television programs that are on general view must be suitable for the children watching. We will always accommodate young peoples' needs in this area. Staff will keep to the recommended viewing age on videos.

## **FURTHER GENERAL INFORMATION**

This will be made available to you near your child bed-space. Please leave it intact for the next patient.

Please let your named nurse know if you cannot find it or if you would like some items photocopied to take with you.

## **YOUR FEEDBACK!**

Your comments and suggestions on how we could improve your and your child's stay on the ward are always welcome. Please tell us what you think or write your comments/suggestions down and put it in the suggestion box on the wall outside the Parents' Room.

## **FUND RAISING**

The Liver Unit began its activity in 1989, with a single consultant and two nurses. The ever increasing demand for children with liver disease has led to its expansion and we wish we had more facilities to offer a better service. Our main source of financing is the NHS. However this does not make provision for research funding or for funding the basic amenities for the parents' accommodation.

If you wish to help us to improve our care for children with liver disease, you may choose to raise funds in the following ways:

**1. Ward 8 Fund.** You may like to raise money to fund equipment and services directly for Ward 8. Please contact the Ward Manager Carien Weijers (Ext 9075) or Julie Taylor, Administrative Manager to the Liaison Nurses (Ext 8273).

**2. Liver Unit Charity Fund.** To maintain research into liver diseases, their causes and outcome, the Liver Unit runs a series of projects which will in the end benefit the patients and families on Ward 8. You may wish to raise funds to promote this research.

For information about donations to the Liver Unit Charity Fund please contact Sue Hankinson, Office Manager(Ext 8254). For information about research please contact Carla Lloyd, Research Manager (Ext 8257). Registered Charity No: 1111945.

**3. Children's Liver Disease Foundation.** This organization raises money to promote awareness of liver disease throughout the country and funds national research but does not necessarily fund the Liver Unit. If you wish to contribute please contact Catherine Arkley, Children's Liver Disease Foundation, 36 Great Charles Street, Queensway, Birmingham, B3 3JY, Tel: 0121 212 3839.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

We appreciate this is a difficult time for your family and want to try and reduce your anxiety and stress as much as possible.

If you wish to contact us ahead of your child admission further specialist information is available in other booklets.

The liaison nurses are contactable on Liver Direct 0121 333 8989, Monday to Friday 1030-1230 and 1430-1630 (Wednesday until 1730) and they will respond to voice messages left out of hours.

Please ask if you have any questions. We will always do our best to answer them.