

COVID-19 AND THE ICU

The coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) virus attacks and damages the lungs. People with chronic lung disease are more likely to need treatment in an intensive care unit (ICU) if they develop COVID-19.

Hospitals are doing everything they can to take care of people with COVID-19 and prevent the spread of the virus.

The ICU team is trained to work across cultural and social differences to provide optimal care in the ICU and after discharge.



COVID-19 TREATMENTS IN THE ICU

1 VENTILATOR

- Helps patients who have acute respiratory distress to breathe
- Is typically needed for more than 2 weeks for patients with COVID-19 in the ICU

2 HIGH-FLOW NASAL CANNULA

- Delivers oxygen at a high rate to patients whose blood oxygen levels are lower than normal (hypoxemic respiratory failure)
- Can be an alternative to a ventilator in some cases

3 PRONING

- Involves placing patients who have acute respiratory failure on their stomach
- Can reduce the need for a ventilator and improve a patient's oxygen levels

+ LIMITED CONTACT

Hospitals have implemented stricter visitor guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. You may also notice tighter restrictions during flu season.

Some hospitals may require a negative COVID-19 test result before entering the facility. Others may screen you when you arrive.

These restrictions:

- Protect patients, their friends and family, and hospital staff
- Limit the spread of the virus



+ STAYING IN TOUCH

Patients with COVID-19 must stay in isolation rooms. These rooms have special equipment that helps keep the virus from spreading to other parts of the hospital. Many hospitals also have dedicated staff who treat only patients with COVID-19.

If you can't visit a patient in the ICU, hospital staff can help you stay in touch. You can use other forms of communication, such as:

- Phone calls
- Video calls
- Cards

+ RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

The good news is that more people in the United States are surviving COVID-19 after ventilator support. This may be the result of doctors continuing to learn more about the virus and how to use ventilators to treat it.

Some people may need other treatments for COVID-19 after release from the ICU. Let the doctor know about any symptoms. Treatments may include:

- Oxygen therapy
- Physical therapy
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Emotional support and counseling



AN EVER-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Remember that doctors and researchers discover more about COVID-19 each day. As they learn, treatments will improve and change. The health-care team will guide you through treatment and recovery.

