

A Quiet ICU

Helping patients heal

To help our patients heal, University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) is lowering noise levels throughout the hospital. This handout explains how we are making the Intensive Care Units (ICUs) quieter.

Why is a quiet ICU important?

High noise levels can:

- Disrupt sleep
- Cause confusion
- Increase risk of falls
- Impair healing



Peaceful environments help healing.

The ICU team is committed to creating a quiet environment for our patients, their visitors, and our staff.

What is the ICU doing?

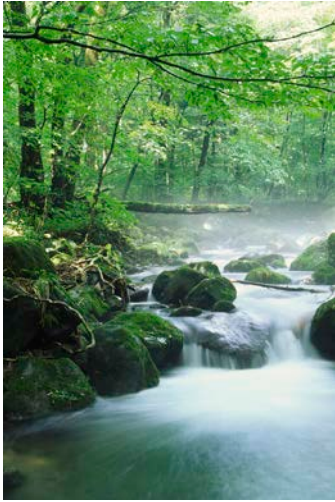
The ICU is doing many things to keep the unit quiet. To lower the noise level, we:

- Limit the number of tests, procedures, and provider visits between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. (Some of these must still occur between these hours, based on patient needs.)
- Decreased the number and volume of overhead announcements
- Installed doors that close quietly
- Decreased equipment noise
- Adjusted the volume of phone ringers and alarms on equipment
- Asked staff and visitors to be aware of their noise level

What can family and visitors do to help?

Here are some things family members and other visitors can do to help reduce noise levels in the ICU:

- Turn phones and other electronic devices to vibrate, silent, or OFF.
- Try to have only 1 or 2 visitors at a time.



Rest Time in the ICU is from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every day.

- Talk quietly. Avoid talking on your cell phone in the hallways.
- Let us know if you hear a lot of noise so we can address the problem.

Rest Time

To give our patients a period of quiet each afternoon, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. is Rest Time in the ICU. For some patients, this may be a time for a nap. For other patients, these 2 hours are a welcome break from the ongoing ICU activity. We will continue to monitor patients and provide needed care during Rest Time.

What to Expect During Rest Time

- The nurse will get patients ready for rest by:
 - Making sure they have what they need
 - Helping them get in a comfortable position
 - Giving them medicines, if needed
- The lights will be dimmed.
- TVs will be turned off (or we will ask you to watch TV with headphones, which we can provide).
- We will minimize procedures and visits from healthcare specialists during these hours. We will try to schedule these before or after Rest Time.
- We will keep monitoring patients as usual. If a patient needs medical attention at any time during Rest Time, staff will respond as needed.

What can family and visitors do during Rest Time?

Remember, Rest Time is your time to rest and recharge, too. Consider taking a break from visiting:

- Get something to eat, take a walk and get fresh air, or take a shower.
- Use the waiting room to make phone calls or write emails.

If you stay at the bedside, please choose a quiet activity such as reading or writing in a journal. This will give your loved one time to rest. Even typing on a keyboard could disturb your loved one.

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your nurse, your attending doctor or anyone on your medical team, the charge nurse, or the nurse manager.