

## About Us

ICUsteps Dublin is a voluntary group. Our support extends to all counties.

It consists of informal "drop-in" meetings where people at different stages in their recovery can share experiences and lend support to one another.

Established by a former intensive care patient, relative and nurses, all volunteering their time.

With Zoom you can join us from the comfort of your own home.

We are affiliated with  
**ICUsteps UK**

For more Information

**Email: [Information@icusteps.ie](mailto:Information@icusteps.ie)**

**Telephone: 085 271 7281**

Visit our website or  
phone 085 2717281  
for details of our Zoom support  
group meetings and  
"Face to Face" venue dates.



Have you or your relative  
been a patient in ICU?

**[www.ICUsteps.ie](http://www.ICUsteps.ie)**  
Email: [Information@icusteps.ie](mailto:Information@icusteps.ie)  
Telephone: 085 271 7281

Support group open to  
former ICU patients,  
family and carers.

Post Hospital Support



ICUsteps Dublin recognises the need for support after critical illness. At our drop in meetings you can share practical insights that can only come from first hand experience, with people who understand, because they have been there too. You may be encouraged seeing others, who are in a similar position to you, progress. In time you may be able to inspire others who are in the early days of recovery. If you feel ready to share your experience or simply listen to others we would like to meet you. Maybe you can help someone else! We look forward to welcoming you.

## The purpose of this leaflet is to give some understanding of what you may expect as you recover from a critical illness.

The time you spent in ICU is the beginning of a longer recovery. This differs for each individual. This can be a slow process and may be dependent on the type of illness you had and the amount of time you spent in the Critical Care area. After ICU you may experience some physical, psychological and memory problems.

### Physical Impact

In the early days after discharge from hospital even simple tasks may leave you feeling exhausted. You may need help with daily activities. Experience of symptoms and duration of recovery can vary from individual to individual, with ups and downs along the way. Talk to your Doctor/GP about what level of activity is best for you. Set self small realistic goals and become aware of your limitations

You may experience:

- **Joint stiffness**
- **Muscle weakness (Up to 2% of muscle mass may be lost per day in ICU)**
- **Problems with balance**
- **Weakness and fatigue**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Hoarseness in voice**
- **Changes in appetite**
- **Tingling or numbness in hands and feet**
- **Changes in condition of hair, skin and nails**

### Psychological & Emotional Effects

It is normal to feel fearful about your health after critical illness. **You may have little or no memory of your ICU stay because of your illness and the medications used in ICU to support your recovery and comfort.** This can result in you feeling like there is a chunk of **'Missing Time'** that you cannot account for. Talking to family members may help you gather information about this time and make sense of events. If you are concerned after a time that you are not feeling better talk with your Doctor/GP and seek support. You need not cope on your own.

Some common effects may include:

- **Anxiety/feeling overwhelmed**
- **Feeling down – even depressed**
- **Difficulty expressing emotion**
- **Feeling tearful**
- **Difficulty sleeping**
- **Nightmares**
- **Losing interest in things you enjoy**
- **Losing interest in family and friends**

### Impairment of Memory

As with physical and psychological effects, some patients may have memory difficulties which can influence their fitness and readiness to return to work **It may be helpful to share your concerns with those who care about you. Allow yourself to be supported by others as you recover.**

You may have difficulty with some of the following:

- **Attention span**
- **Mental processing**
- **Mental processing speed**
- **Language**
- **Visual Disturbances (including vivid hallucinations or dreams)**
- **Recognition of people and names**

### Impact on family

Critical illness is a family crisis. As a relative you will likely have experienced that which nobody could reasonably be prepared for and you too require support.

You may experience some of the following:

- **Anxiety**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Helplessness**
- **Lack of self care** (i.e. not eating properly, not exercising, not resting)

You will best help yourself and your loved one by also taking care of yourself. Eat well, rest, exercise and seek support. **This cannot be stressed enough.** Be informed as to what to expect in your loved one's recovery.