



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About the Clinical Decision Unit at MSK

This information explains what to expect in the Clinical Decision Unit (CDU) at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK).

What is the CDU?

The Clinical Decision Unit, also known as the CDU, is the observation unit of the Urgent Care Center (UCC). It's designed to provide short term treatments and tests in an efficient, safe, and comfortable environment. The CDU is located near the UCC.

Why am I in the CDU?

Your UCC provider decided that a short stay in the CDU is the best way to care for you. Common reasons people are cared for in the CDU include chest pain, trouble breathing, abnormal blood work, fever, dizziness, fainting, and pain.

Who is involved in my care?

Your CDU team includes healthcare providers from different specialties:

- Doctors

- Advanced Practice Providers (Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants)
- Registered Nurses
- Nursing Assistants

Other healthcare providers may consult in your care and discharge planning.

How long will I be in the CDU?

It depends. We expect you'll stay between 6 hours and 24 hours. Ask a member of your CDU team about your plan of care.

Will I be able to eat?

It depends. If it's safe for you to eat, we will give you a light meal.

What happens if I am admitted?

You will stay in your CDU room until your inpatient bed is ready.

What about my medications?

We will review the medications you take at home and give you the medications you need. If you have any of your medications with you, ask your healthcare provider if you should take them.

Can I have visitors?

Yes. Visitors are welcome in your room and in the lounge.

Will my primary oncologist know I'm here?

Yes. Your healthcare provider will be in contact with your primary oncologist.

What should I expect while I'm in the CDU?

Your healthcare providers from the CDU and UCC will coordinate your care with your primary oncologist. We will also closely monitor your:

- Heart rate
- Blood pressure
- Breathing
- Temperature
- Pain level
- Blood tests

You may have tests and treatments depending on what you need, such as intravenous (IV) medications, blood transfusions, or x-rays.

What happens when I'm discharged?

We will give you instructions explaining what you should do next. If you're discharged and prescribed new medications, we will give you a prescription or fill it for you at our pharmacy.

When is the CDU open?

The unit is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How will I be billed for my care in the CDU?

Your observation stay will be billed as an outpatient service (under Medicare this will be under Part B). This is different from inpatient admissions, which are billed under inpatient services (under Medicare this would be under Part A). If you have any questions, call Patient Financial Services at 212-639-8242.

Clinical Decision Unit

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

1275 York Avenue, New York, NY 10065

T 212-639-2790

F 929-321-1504

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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