

Can I receive care in the Virtual Ward from another house?

You may stay in a friend or family member's house while you are in the Virtual Ward. You must let the Virtual Ward care team know where you will be staying and how to contact you throughout your stay. You should let your Virtual Ward care team know before you leave the hospital. If this changes during your treatment, let the Virtual Ward care team know.

What happens when I am discharged?

When you no longer need hospital care, you will be discharged from the Virtual Ward. Your Virtual Ward care team will let you know when you are being discharged from the Virtual Ward.

When it is time to return your kit, follow these steps.

1. Put all of the devices back into the clear plastic bags that they were sent in.
2. Put those bags inside the large brown envelope marked 'Return Bag'. You do not need to return the big cardboard box.
3. Wait for a Technology Provider Customer Services agent to call you. They will arrange a collection of the kit.

The Virtual Ward care team will tell your GP and any other relevant healthcare providers about your care in the Virtual Ward and any changes to your medication.

What are the risks of receiving care in a Virtual Ward?

The Virtual Ward service is new in Ireland. There is limited information from other

countries about the potential risks and benefits of receiving care in a Virtual Ward. Virtual Wards work well in other countries, which is why we are introducing them here.

Some of the risks of Virtual Ward care are listed below.

- ▶ **Technical issues with remote monitoring equipment.** The Virtual Ward care team will be aware if your equipment is not working properly. If you experience a technical problem using your remote monitoring equipment you can contact the Technology Provider Customer Services, Doccla, on 01 223 8858.
- ▶ **Your health may deteriorate while you are in the Virtual Ward.** If you or your family or carer are concerned about your symptoms worsening, you can contact the Virtual Ward care team. You can contact them by phone or request a call back using the message function in the Virtual Ward app. See contact details on the last page of this leaflet. The remote monitoring equipment will alert the Virtual Ward care team to any changes in your condition or if your treatment is not working well. If this happens, the Virtual Ward care team will contact you. You will be clinically assessed and advised what action is needed.



What are the anticipated benefits of Virtual Ward care?

- ▶ Better recovery at home. Being in a familiar environment, where you may have friends, family and pets, can improve your physical health, mental wellbeing and overall recovery.
- ▶ Higher satisfaction with care.
- ▶ A lower risk of hospital-acquired infections.
- ▶ A lower cost of travel to and from the hospital for family and carers.
- ▶ Less chance of needing another inpatient hospital stay in the near future.

What to do in an emergency

If you or your family or carer are concerned about your symptoms worsening, you can contact the Virtual Ward team. You can contact them by phone or request a call back using the message function in the Virtual Ward app. **The Virtual Ward is not an emergency service. If your health gets worse very quickly, you are seriously ill or feel your life is at risk, you should always call 112 or 999.**

Contact details

You can contact your Virtual Ward team at:



Virtual Wards

The care of hospital,
the comfort of home.



This patient information booklet tells you about being a patient in a Virtual Ward. It tells you what you can expect if you choose to receive your hospital care at home in a Virtual Ward.

What is a Virtual Ward?

A Virtual Ward is an option for some patients to receive the care they need at home instead of in the hospital. Virtual Wards support patients to receive care, monitoring and treatment in their own home. This is possible because of technology. You will stay under the care of the hospital team while you are a patient in a Virtual Ward.



Who is the Virtual Ward for?

Your care team may suggest Virtual Ward care to you if:

- ▶ you are in hospital with certain cardiovascular or respiratory conditions
- ▶ your care team feels that your condition can be safely managed at home with the help of remote monitoring

What happens if I am suitable for the Virtual Ward?

Your care team will tell you and your family or carer about being a patient on a Virtual Ward. You and your family or carer can ask any questions you may have. You will have a choice to be a patient in a Virtual Ward.

If you do not want to be a patient in the Virtual Ward, you will continue to receive care in the hospital in line with your agreed care plan.

Once you are a patient in the Virtual Ward, you can change your mind at any time. Speak to your Virtual Ward care team if you want to go back into hospital.

What happens if I choose to move to the Virtual Ward?

Your care team, including your consultant, will agree a personalised care plan with you. Your family or carer can be part of this conversation.

You will receive a Virtual Ward 'technology kit'. The kit includes all the monitoring devices you will need and a mobile phone or tablet. The kit will help you check your health at home by measuring your vital signs, for example your temperature or blood pressure. The Virtual Ward care team will use this information to monitor your health.

The Virtual Ward care team will show you, and your family or carer, how to use the devices before you leave the hospital. They will also tell you what measurements to take and how often you need to take them. The technology will safely monitor your condition at home and send the results to the care team in the hospital.

How will I receive care on the Virtual Ward?

The Virtual Ward care team will meet with you and your family or carer and explain how they will manage your care at home. Your Virtual Ward care team will monitor your care 24 hours a day while you are on the Virtual Ward.

You will answer one or more regular health questionnaires in the Virtual Ward app on the phone or tablet. You will also need to check your vital signs and enter the results in the Virtual Ward app. If you forget to do this, you will get a call or a message to remind you.

The information you enter will be sent to your Virtual Ward care team. They will be able to see your health information and vital signs on their computer system straight away.

Your Virtual Ward care team will get in touch with you if they are concerned about your answers to the questionnaires or vital signs.

How often will my care team contact me when I am on the Virtual Ward?

The Virtual Ward care team will agree with you how often they contact you. They will contact you by video or phone call, as agreed. It is important that the Virtual Ward care team can contact you when they need to. You can contact the Virtual Ward care team at any time by phone or request a call back using the message function in the Virtual Ward app. See contact details on the last page of this leaflet.

What if my care plan needs to be changed?

Changes to your care plan can be made without you having to return to hospital. For example, your medication could be changed or extra equipment can be sent to help you with your recovery. There is no need to contact your GP while you are a patient of the Virtual Ward as you are under the care of the hospital.

If you need to go to the hospital for tests or treatment, the Virtual Ward care team will tell you where to go. The team will support you to return back home as soon as it is safe to do so.

How do I use the monitoring kit and what happens if there is a problem?

The Virtual Ward Care Team will explain how to use each device. Each device in the Virtual Ward 'technology kit' also comes with instructions. You should read these carefully before you start using the kit. There are also some videos that explain how to use the devices. They are saved in the app on your Virtual Ward phone or tablet.

Some devices use batteries. If you see a device's battery is low, call the Technology Provider Customer Services, Doccla, on 01 223 8858. They will send you new batteries.

How long do I stay in the Virtual Ward?

You will stay in the Virtual Ward for as long as you need hospital care. How long you stay in the Virtual Ward depends on your health condition and the care you need. Some people are discharged in less than 7 days.

Can I leave my house while receiving care in the Virtual Ward?

It is recommended that you stay in the area of your home. If you need to leave your house for any reason, you should discuss this with the Virtual Ward care team.

