

Trauma Center

Care for Serious Injury



Regional Medical
Center of San Jose

Dedicated To Your Well Being.

Welcome

Dedicated to your well being.

Welcome to Regional Medical Center of San Jose. You are receiving this booklet because you or a close friend or relative may have suffered a serious accident or traumatic injury. Rest assured that you or your loved one is in good hands. The team of professionals that supports our Regional Trauma Center is highly-trained and experienced in caring for trauma victims.

Throughout your visit to our hospital, you will be meeting and talking with many new people. We understand that all of that can be confusing, especially given the shock of dealing with a life-threatening traumatic injury. Our goal is to provide you or your loved one immediate emergency treatment, help you manage the injury, recuperate in a timely manner, and regain confidence in your ability to return to normal function.

We recognize that the shock of the injury and subsequent treatment can be painful, and that recovery can be a long, arduous process. Know that your trauma team is here to support you throughout your ordeal. Consider us your cheerleaders, your second family, your care team.

As you read through the following pages, please feel free to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you may have. We are here to help and wish you a speedy recovery.

Questions and Answers

What is Trauma?



Trauma refers to a potential life-threatening injury. It is the primary cause of death for people under the age of 44 and the third leading cause of death for persons of all ages. The key to survival is immediate, specialized care by a team of professionals with special training and experience in evaluating and treating trauma. Such a team is available at Regional Medical Center of San Jose.

What is a Trauma Center?

A trauma center is part of a county-wide system that includes a communication system, a medical helicopter, transportation by paramedics trained in advanced life-support techniques, and a specialized hospital unit fully equipped and constantly staffed. Because trauma team members are always present, they can act rapidly, giving patients with severe injuries the best possible chance of survival. Experiencing a trauma can be overwhelming for both patient and family; therefore, special support and care is also available.

In May 2005, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors designated Regional Medical Center of San Jose as one of three trauma centers that serve our County. The Santa Clara County trauma system also serves the neighboring counties of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey and San Mateo.



Who is Brought to a Trauma Center?

The County has designated specific guidelines for determining which patients should be taken to a trauma center, even bypassing closer hospitals.

The criteria include:

- The condition of the patient, which indicates a life-threatening injury.
- Special circumstances of an accident, such as a pedestrian hit by a car, a high speed vehicle accident, or a fall from a significant height that may have caused a life-threatening injury that is not immediately appreciated.

These conservative guidelines make sure no hidden injuries are missed. Thus, some patients brought to the trauma center will be found, after complete medical evaluation, not to have serious injury while others will have a life-threatening injury requiring immediate evaluation and treatment.

What is the Trauma Team and How Does it Work?

The trauma team is a group of specialists experienced in caring for patients with severe injuries. Every member of the trauma team is vital. Together, they evaluate the patient, obtain diagnostic tests and begin immediate treatment.

- The leader of the team is the trauma surgeon. Because most victims have several injuries, some very complex, the trauma surgeon decides which injuries have priority and remains in total command of the care until the patient is discharged.
- The emergency medicine physician plays a key role in assessing the patient's condition along with the trauma surgeon.
- Nurses start intravenous lines, monitor life signs, draw blood, administer medication, communicate changes and prepare equipment.
- Respiratory therapists administer oxygen and assist with breathing.
- Laboratory technicians perform blood tests.
- Imaging technologists take x-rays.
- Other nurses and technicians record all actions and stand by to call other specialists if needed.
- Social Services staff is available to support patients and family members.



Meanwhile, should surgery be necessary, the third principle member of the team — the anesthesiologist is readying the operating room with a second trauma surgeon at hand to assist.

The scene may seem hectic, but is in fact carefully orchestrated and organized.

What if the Patient Needs Surgery?

Some operations must take place immediately, such as those to stop internal bleeding. Others may be done less urgently. After the operation, the surgeon will meet the family to answer questions. A

member of the trauma team will advise the family where to wait for the doctor.

What Happens Next?

The most severely injured patients are transferred to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where their conditions can be constantly monitored. Other patients may be cared for in other units of the hospital, depending on the nature of their injuries.

What is the Purpose of the ICU?

Patients admitted to the ICU are closely monitored. Each patient has a specially assigned nurse and special equipment to allow constant observation and immediate treatment if necessary.

When are Family Members Allowed to Visit the Patient in the ICU?

Visiting hours are from 10 am – 8 pm for immediate family only. Since patients are critically ill and need quiet time, visitors are limited to two at one time and asked to keep visits brief. Special arrangements for limited family visiting beyond normal visiting hours may be arranged with the nurse.



When do Physicians Visit the Patients?

The trauma surgeon visits each patient in the morning and, if necessary, again in the evening. He or she is usually available to answer questions. Consulting specialist physicians also visit the patient, as needed.

Why does a Different Trauma Surgeon Visit the Patient Daily?

The nature of trauma care requires a surgeon to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The trauma surgeons work in a group with one surgeon on duty at all times. The group includes the trauma medical director and eight trauma surgeons. These surgeons work closely together and all are familiar with each patient's care.

There may also be other specialists involved in the patient's care, depending on the nature of the injuries.

What Happens after the Crisis is Over?

The patient may continue to recover in one of the other nursing units in the medical center. In these units, visiting hours are also 10:00 am – 8:00 pm, but are less restricted as to length of visits or number of visitors.

Physicians visit patients once a day. Many other professionals may be involved in the patient's care, such as respiratory therapists, dietitians, social workers and pharmacists. All team members work under the supervision of the trauma surgeon and other specialists.

How can Family Contact the Physician?

Each physician involved with the patient's care visits regularly and is available to answer questions at that time. It is best to designate one person to serve as spokesperson and to write questions ahead of time. A family conference may also be arranged where the plan of care may be discussed.

The trauma clinical nurse specialist is also available to answer questions and help with many details. If patients or family members have questions that the nurse is unable to answer, patients and family members are encouraged to ask for a special visit, family conference or telephone call with the physician. To reach the trauma clinical nurse specialist, call Trauma Services at 408.272.6480.

What if the Patient has a Primary Care Physician?

If the patient has a regular doctor, we will notify that physician as soon as possible.



What if the Patient is a Member of a Health Plan?

Most health plans have arrangements with Regional Medical Center so that all care can be received here. Some plans, such as Kaiser Permanente, require that the patient be transferred to a Kaiser facility or other hospital as soon as the patient is medically safe.

What if the Patient has Medi-Cal Insurance?

Regional Medical Center of San Jose is able to care for all patients who have Medi-Cal insurance throughout their entire acute hospitalization and for follow-up treatment within 60 days of discharge.

Who will Contact the Patient's Employer?

The patient or family member should contact the employer. The trauma service can assist with any requirements the employer has for verification of the injury, work status letters, disability or insurance forms.

What Bills can be Expected?

Trauma care is complex and requires many services and specialists. There will be a bill from Regional Medical Center and a separate bill from the trauma surgeon, a physician practicing with Northern California Trauma Medical Group.

There will also be separate bills from other specialists who provide services.

Even if the patient had a relatively minor injury and was treated and released from the Emergency Department, there will be a charge from the trauma team to respond and evaluate the patient. This charge includes costs for laboratory tests and x-rays to thoroughly check for any hidden, life-threatening injuries.

Although trauma care is costly, there are often other financial resources available to help and no one will be denied needed treatment.

It is important for you to understand that some of your patient care providers may not be under contract with your health plan. It is advisable that you present these charges to your health care plan.

What other Sources of Support are Available?

The social worker is a crucial member of the trauma team and a link between hospital services and the family. The social worker will:

- Assist patients and families during the crisis phase.
- Orient the family to the process of trauma care.
- Keep the family informed of the patient's status.
- Provide emotional support.

- Assist in notifying other family members and friends of the patient's condition.
- Link the patient and family to appropriate community services and financial support such as Victims' Witness Program, California Children's Services, County Health and Hospital System, Medi-Cal, Medicare and State Disability Insurance.

Case managers are available to assist patients and families with discharge needs.

Financial planners are available to assist patients and their families with financial questions or concerns.



What if the Patient needs Long-Term Rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation is a special service for patients whose injuries require a longer convalescence. These include head injuries, spinal cord injuries and injuries to major bones.

Depending on the injuries involved, patients might be helped to regain movement, build strength, achieve independence in activities of daily living, restore speech and comprehension or regain confidence and self-worth.

Regional's case management team will arrange for rehabilitation care. The location of services will depend on the patient's or family's home location and insurance. The team, the patient and the family will discuss options for location and for the patient's placement in a rehabilitation center, if needed.

What Happens on the Day of Discharge?

On the day of the patient's discharge from the hospital, the physician will make a final visit and give discharge instructions. If possible, it is helpful to have a family member present to assure the instructions are fully understood. The discharge instructions will include such information as diet, medications, wound care, permitted activity and follow-up visits.

What Happens after Discharge?

The patient will be asked to see at least one physician and possibly more if the other specialists are involved. These appointments are very important to the patient's continued recovery. Discharge instructions, including recommended follow-up, are provided to the patient.

Most patients will have an appointment to see the trauma surgeon for follow-up. The office is located at 2505 Samaritan Drive, Suite 504, San Jose, CA 95124. Patients are seen by appointment only. The appointment phone number is 408.356.3753.



What if an Emergency Develops?

If an emergency arises, call 911.

For General Questions

Trauma Services 408.272.6480

For Support Services

Patient & Family Relations 408.259.5000 ext. 6040

For Follow-Up Care

Trauma Clinic 408.356.3753

Specialty Physicians *Refer to discharge instructions.*

For Financial Counseling

Bills for Regional Medical Center

Patient Accounting Systems (PAS) 1.800.307.7135

Trauma Surgeon Bills 408.356.3753

If you need the services of a Social Worker, Case Manager or Chaplain, please contact your nurse and he or she will contact these individuals for you.

If you need any further assistance, please call Trauma Services at 408.272.6480.

Resources

Regional HealthSource Physician Referral and Information

888•RMC•8881 (English, Español)

888•RMC•8811 (Vietnamese)

Regional Medical Center of San Jose Cancer Care Institute

725 E. Santa Clara Street, Suite 103

San Jose, CA 95112-1934

Phone: 408•977•4673

Regional Surgery Center

221 North Jackson Avenue

San Jose, CA 95116-1691

Phone: 408•729•2848

Regional Rehabilitation Services

225 North Jackson Avenue

San Jose, CA 95116-1691

Phone: 408•729•2882



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