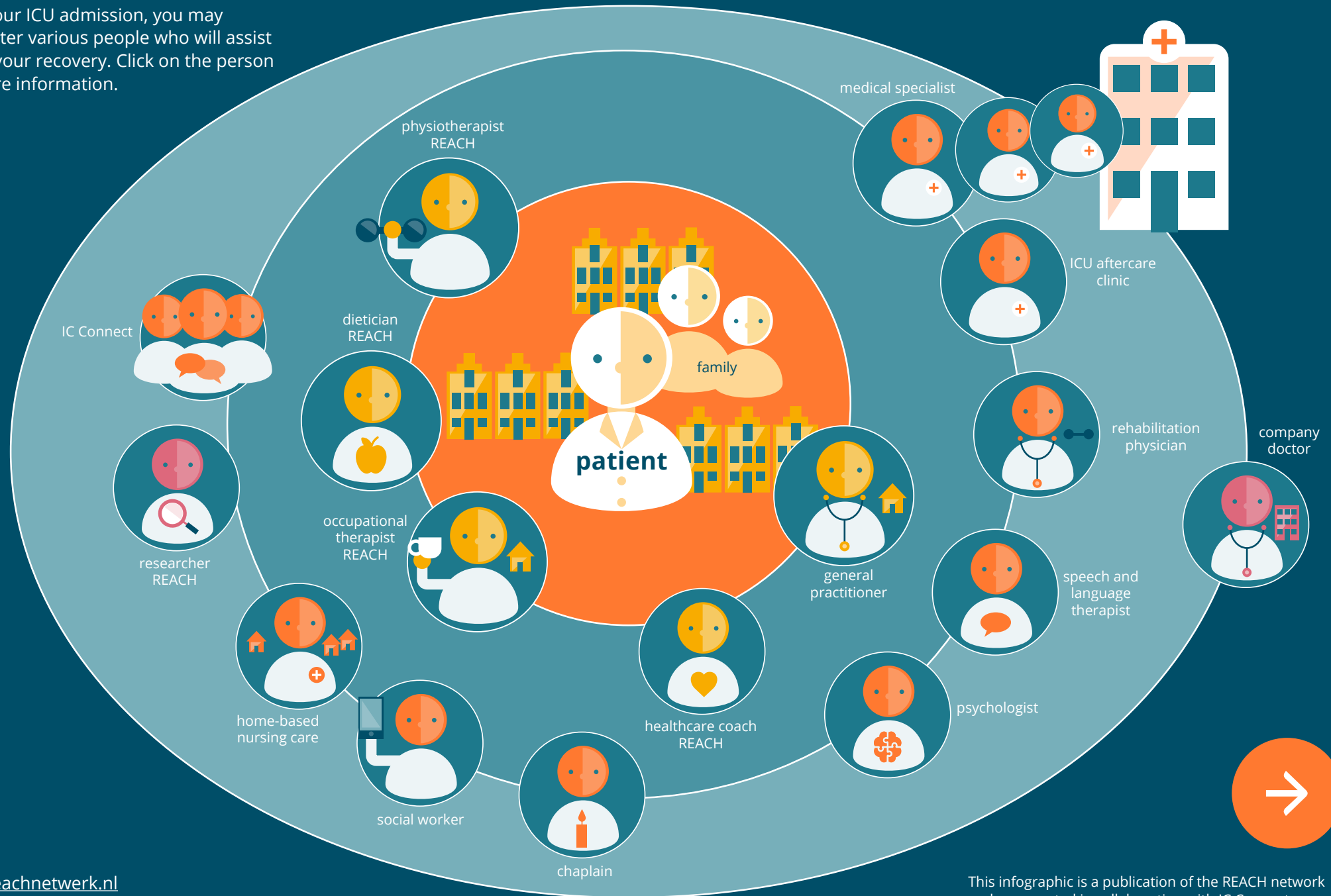


Who can provide help after my ICU stay?

→ After your ICU admission, you may encounter various people who will assist you in your recovery. Click on the person for more information.



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The REACH network

Each year in the Netherlands, about 85,000 patients are admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU) because of a critical illness. After hospital discharge, some of these patients experience long-term problems in daily functioning - these problems can be physical, mental and/or cognitive. This combination of impairments is called the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS). Help from a physiotherapist, dietician and/or occupational therapist is often necessary.

Professionals who are part of the REACH network are specially trained to monitor and help patients with Post Intensive Care Syndrome after hospital discharge and assist them in their recovery. The REACH network is expanding, specialist professionals in the different regions in the Netherlands can be found on the website.

REACH professionals know how critical illness and admission to the ICU can affect the body and mind and understand the problems patients can experience when they are back home. They can draw up a personal rehabilitation plan that takes into account the wishes and possibilities of patients and can refer to a colleague with specific expertise if necessary.

For more information visit the website of the Reach network →

Patient



You have been critically ill and have been admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU). You may notice that you are still very tired. It is also normal to feel various emotions such as sadness, fear, gloom or confusion. You may also experience problems with your memory or concentration, or find that you are less able to deal with busy environments or crowds. These problems are part of the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS).

PICS complaints can occur in various combinations, regardless of the reason you were admitted to the ICU. It is not known how many patients develop PICS after an ICU stay, but it is estimated that this happens to around fifty percent. Some people don't realize what actually happened until they return home. It is important to allow yourself time to recover. Keep in mind that it may take a year or more before you feel a bit like your old self again. Especially in the beginning, it is important to get enough rest.

You can ask for appropriate help during your recovery. You can, for example, contact a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and/or dietician from the REACH network. You can find these expert professionals here: <https://www.reachnetwerk.nl/zorgzoeker/>.

You can also get in touch with the patient association IC Connect, who can provide you with information about the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS) and through whom you might meet people who with similar experiences. (<https://icconnect.nl/>).

Family

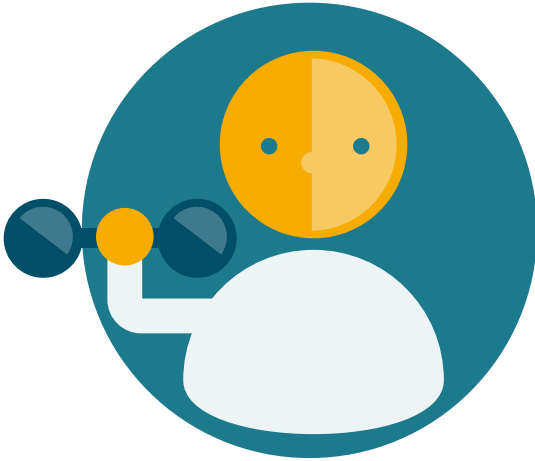


The fact that you have been seriously ill and have been admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU), has also had a great impact on your family. Family members can - just as patients - also experience Post-Intensive Care Syndrome and may feel anxious or worried. This is called PICS-Family.

You can get professional help with your recovery from the REACH physiotherapist, occupational therapist or dietician. You can find more information through the REACH website: <https://www.reachnetwerk.nl/>.

These professionals might also want to speak to your relatives. Family members can also find help, via the general practitioner. Via the website of the patient association [IC Connect](#) you and your family members can get in touch with others, who may have similar experiences.

The physiotherapist



A physiotherapist (or physical therapist) is someone who can help people who experience difficulty with movement, for example because they are weakened after being in hospital, have little muscle strength or are easily tired. The physiotherapist can visit you at home to help you, until you are strong enough to go to their practice for your treatment.

What can the physiotherapist do for you?

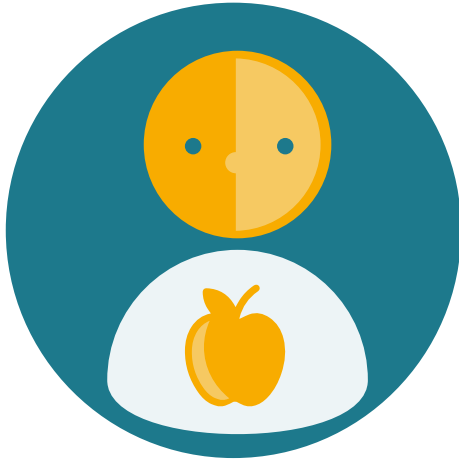
After an ICU admission, many people suffer from muscle weakness, loss of stamina and tiredness, as part of the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS). The physiotherapist can help you to get stronger and regain confidence in your body. You will receive exercises and advice on what to do.

The **REACH physiotherapist** has completed special training on the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS) and has a lot of experience with the REACH treatment program. Through the REACH network, the physiotherapist is always aware of the latest knowledge about recovery after ICU admission. You can find the REACH therapist in your area via the map on the [REACH website](#).

Collaboration with other professionals

Apart from physical problems, many people experience mental problems after ICU admission. The physiotherapist considers whether other professionals, such as a dietician, occupational therapist or healthcare coach, should be involved. Collaboration between these professionals is important, so that care is coordinated well.

The dietician



The dietician is the specialist in the field of nutrition, in relation to health. Nutrition is very important in the recovery of patients after ICU admission.

What can the dietician do for you?

Many people experience (extreme) weight loss, loss of muscle (muscle mass and muscle strength) and a deteriorated nutritional status after ICU admission. Due to your illness and because you didn't move much and ate less while in the hospital, your general condition has worsened and it might be more difficult to carry out your daily activities. The dietician will provide you with nutritional advice to get stronger and to stimulate muscle growth, keeping in mind your personal circumstances.

The **REACH dietician** has completed special training on the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS) and has a lot of experience with the REACH treatment program. Through the REACH network, the dietician is always aware of the latest knowledge about recovery after ICU admission. You can find the REACH dietician in your area via the map on the REACH [website](#).

Collaboration with other professionals

Good nutrition and a healthy nutritional status are important conditions for recovery. During recovery, the combination of the correct intake of proteins in combination with exercise, is essential. The dietician considers whether other professionals, such as a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or healthcare coach, should be involved. Collaboration between these professionals is important, so that care is coordinated well.

The occupational therapist



The occupational therapist plays an important role in the recovery of patients who experience problems with daily activities, caring for family or returning to work after an ICU admission.

What can the occupational therapist do for you?

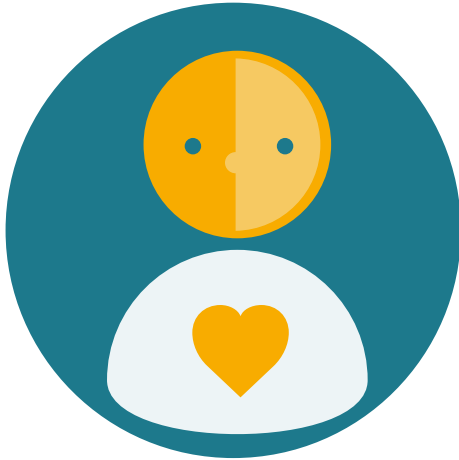
After an ICU admission, many people suffer from fatigue, or have trouble with memory and concentration or struggle with being in busy or crowded environments. These problems are part of the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS). Occupational therapy can help you in finding a (better) balance between activities and rest, or training certain activities so that you can resume your social or work activities again.

The **REACH occupational therapist** has completed special training on the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS) and has a lot of experience with the REACH treatment program. Through the REACH network, the occupational therapist is always aware of the latest knowledge about recovery after ICU admission. You can find the REACH occupational therapist in your area via the map on the REACH [website](#).

Collaboration with other professionals

Balance between activity and rest is important for recovery. This applies to physical activity, but also to mental strain. The occupational therapist considers whether other professionals, such as a physiotherapist, dietician or healthcare coach, should be involved. Collaboration between these professionals is important, so that care is coordinated well.

Healthcare coach / Balance training



People who have been in ICU, and also their family members, sometimes have to make major adjustments in their lives. This is due to the various problems they experience after the ICU admission. People often notice this in their work, hobbies or in dealing with friends and family. It seems that balance is lost and that is when it can help to connect to people who experience the same things and seek help from a healthcare coach.

The REACH network collaborates closely with healthcare coach Hanneke Oonk.

Because Hanneke has worked as a nurse in the ICU for many years, she understands the experience of former ICU-patients and their relatives very well. The healthcare coach will explain the Post-Intensive Care Syndrome to you and can provide tips and advice on how to deal with this.

<https://www.reachnetwerk.nl/zorgzoeker/>

Researcher



Sometimes, while still in the hospital or after you have been discharged home, you are asked if you want to participate in research. You are free to decide if you want to participate or not. It is never mandatory.

It is possible that you have to fill out a questionnaire, or a researcher might ask you to perform a physical test to see how fit you are. Sometimes a researcher wants to ask you (and sometimes your family members) questions and hear about your experience, during an interview.

The REACH network conducts a lot of research to improve the rehabilitation for patients during or after ICU admission.

This may involve research looking into the treatment a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or dietician gives to patients, or how these professionals should collaborate. REACH also investigates new forms of treatment, such as monitoring via a mobile application or remote rehabilitation. A REACH professional might ask you if you would like to participate in one of the studies.

IC Connect - patient and family support



IC Connect is the patient organization for all (former) ICU patients, for their loved ones and for the relatives of deceased ICU patients.

Activities of IC Connect focus on limiting the negative consequences of an ICU admission for patients and their relatives.

IC Connect provides information on the medical reasons leading to the ICU admission, on common treatments in the ICU and on survival of critical illness. They also organize and encourage peer contact for patients and relatives.

IC Connect also regularly organizes ICU cafes, where people who have been in ICU and their relatives can meet other families with similar experiences, can get information and ask questions.

The IC Connect website contains several short animation films (also in English) which provide clear information about PICS and PICS-F. There is also a separate page for children.

More information:
[ICConnect](#)

General practitioner or general practice mental health worker



Your general practitioner (GP) has probably received a message from the hospital that you have been admitted to the ICU. Sometimes the GP will contact you after you have returned home, to find out how you are.

If you continue to have health problems after hospital discharge, you can make an appointment with your GP to discuss these problems.

Dependent on your problems, the GP will give you advice or refer you to a healthcare professional who can support you in your recovery. You do not need a referral from your GP, to make an appointment with a **REACH professional**.

The **general practice mental health worker** (POH-GGZ in Dutch) can help you if you worry a lot, feel anxious or for example struggle to sleep since your discharge from hospital. The POH-GGZ schedules meetings with you and can also refer you to a psychologist if necessary. Usually the GP will refer you to the mental health worker and the waiting times are not that long.

The medical specialist



A medical specialist is a medical doctor who has a lot of knowledge of a particular disease or health problem. This could be, for example, a cardiologist, a lung specialist, or a surgeon. Medical specialists often work in hospitals.

Sometimes, you are expected to go for check up appointments with the specialist, a few more times after hospital discharge. He or she will then conduct an examination or prescribe medication. The specialist can also refer you to another healthcare professional who can support you in your recovery, such as a REACH professional.

Rehabilitation physician



The rehabilitation doctor is a medical specialist who helps to limit the negative consequences of an illness or accident as much as possible so that you can regain as much of your functioning in daily life as possible.

Sometimes the rehabilitation doctor will come to see you in the ICU or in the hospital. The rehabilitation doctor investigates if you can go home or maybe can benefit from temporary admission to a rehabilitation center or nursing home. There, you will receive treatment that will help you to become stronger, before going home.

Speech and language therapist



A speech and language therapist helps people who have problems with swallowing, eating/drinking or with communication due to changes in voice, speech or language.

People who are on a ventilator in the ICU, cannot speak. The speech therapist will then help them to communicate. It may be that swallowing, coughing or speaking becomes more difficult when you can breathe on your own again. The speech therapist will help with exercises to regain control and gives advice to the nursing staff about the best way for you to eat and drink. Sometimes problems with swallowing or the voice and speaking persist even after discharge from hospital. In that case, you can go see a speech therapist.



Home-based nursing care

A district nurse or community nurse can provide nursing care to people who are discharged home from hospital but still need medical care.

The district nurse can help you with medication intake, wound care and daily care.

Psychologist



A psychologist helps people during recovery when people feel anxious, are depressed or have problems coming to grips with what has happened.

A psychologist can also help with cognitive problems (such as problems with concentration or memory, or feeling overwhelmed) which might have started after an ICU admission.

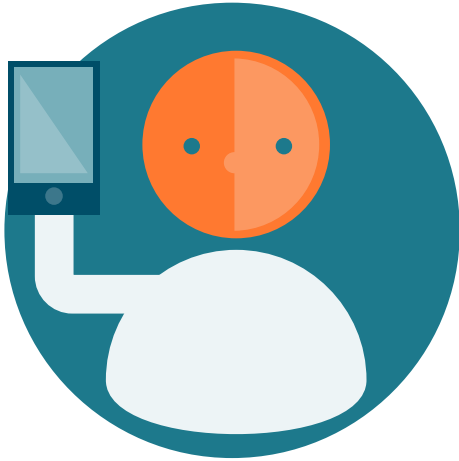


Chaplain

A chaplain offers a listening ear, a word of comfort and advice on questions you might have about meaningfulness.

A chaplain talks to people who are in need of conversations on a deeper level. This can be about concerns and problems, but also about topics that make you happy.

Social worker



The social worker assists with mental, social and emotional problems associated with being ill, being in hospital or having received medical treatments while in ICU.

A social worker can help both patients and family members with this. The social worker often comes to talk to you during the ICU admission or in the hospital.

ICU aftercare clinic



Many hospitals have an ICU aftercare clinic which will invite patients and their loved ones around 2-3 months after discharge from the hospital for a meeting with an ICU doctor and/or an ICU nurse.

Sometimes a rehabilitation doctor or physiotherapist is also present. You will usually be asked to fill in some questionnaires in advance. There is also the possibility to visit the ICU if you would like that. A visit to the ICU aftercare clinic can help you to process what happened to you.

Company doctor



A company doctor or occupational health and safety doctor helps people to return to their work or to find suitable work (reintegration).

The company doctor will advise you and your employer about what is needed so that you can return to work.