Although new technology is used to assist medical care, it will never address the human needs that both patients and families have during a time of critical illness—such as a warm touch, a sense of caring, and face-to-face communication with doctors and nurses. These elements of care are essential to decrease unnecessary stress and promote emotional and physical healing.

Rest assured that nurses will always be present in the ICU and available to provide immediate patient care. Feel free to ask hospital staff or your physician about Health First VitalWatch.

Why are cameras necessary in each ICU patient’s room?

Doctors and nurses only view patients when necessary to see how they’re doing. Just as your doctor needs to see patients in person, VitalWatch e-intensivists and nurses also need to “make rounds” to check on patients. Cameras are located above the doors of each patient’s room. When the camera is turned off, it faces inward toward the wall. When turned on, the camera faces the patient and a green light comes on.

How can I be sure private patient health information is protected?

Several measures have been taken:
- Access to information is limited to those with hospital authorization.
- Information isn’t released to anyone other than those providing medical care.
- No temporary or permanent recording is made from any camera or microphone.
- Sending patient information to/from Health First VitalWatch occurs only over secure private data lines (information is NOT transmitted over the Internet).
- A scrambling technique is applied to all information (encryption) to make it unreadable as it travels across the phone lines. When the information reaches the VitalWatch office, the technique is reversed so that physicians and nurses can read it. Data is sent from Health First VitalWatch to the hospital the same way.
- All personnel gain entry into the VitalWatch office through secured access.
- e-Intensivists use a secured personal identification number (PIN) as an authorized electronic signature instead of a written signature when ordering treatments. These PINs are private and periodically changed to ensure security.
A Watchful, Expert Eye You Can Trust

When a patient’s condition in an intensive care unit (ICU) is critical, nothing can replace the effectiveness of a specialist in the room. An intensivist is a doctor who specializes in caring for critically-ill patients. These specialists normally work with your family physician or surgeon and ICU nurses. But what happens when the intensivist can’t be there every minute?

Health First VitalWatch provides you and your loved ones with constant, expert care by a team of critical care experts who monitor every aspect of the patient’s condition—24 hours a day, seven days a week. Health First VitalWatch doesn’t replace your family physician or surgeon, but provides additional support to ensure the best possible outcome.

How does Health First VitalWatch work?

Health First VitalWatch is an eICU® program, an advanced telemedicine solution from VISICU, Inc., the leading provider of remote care to patients in ICUs. Using computers and private, highspeed data lines, a trained e-intensivist can accurately monitor ICU patients from a remote location. This e-intensivist is supported by one or more critical care registered nurses and healthcare assistants. The VitalWatch team is located in the Health First administrative offices in Rockledge.

How does my doctor work the VitalWatch team?

Your family physician or surgeon selects the level of care he or she wants the VitalWatch team to provide. This may range from monitoring only to full service—where VitalWatch e-intensivists make decisions about treatment when your doctor isn’t present in the ICU. Regardless of the circumstances, VitalWatch doctors talk frequently with your physician about his or her plan of medical care.

Your doctor makes the decisions.

Your doctor makes all final decisions regarding your loved one’s care. Because your physician and the VitalWatch e-intensivist discuss medical status and treatment plans daily, the e-intensivist may modify treatment according to your physician’s plan when he or she is not present in the hospital.

Vigilance at every bedside.

Patients in any room can deteriorate and require rapid response. Extending VitalWatch’s sight beyond the ICU is now done using the eCare Mobile unit. With the ability to be moved into any patient room, it enables that room and patient to immediately become part of our coverage, and thus come under the watchful eye of our critical care specialists. The eCare Mobile Unit offers an additional enhancement — the ability to do two-way video between the VitalWatch team and the bedside caregivers anywhere it’s placed.

How does the Health First VitalWatch team deliver medical care?

Vital signs, medications, blood test results, X-rays and other information from bedside monitors are sent to the VitalWatch facility by private, high-speed data lines. This information is received on computers exactly as you see it in the hospital room for the doctors and nurses to view. Patients can be examined through the use of special cameras, and the VitalWatch team can talk directly with hospital nurses and doctors. The team also has powerful computer systems that continuously analyze incoming information and alerts them to possible problems. Other systems available contain the latest medical information for diagnosing and treating many ICU conditions. The combination of on-site care of nurses and the monitoring by the VitalWatch team provides the very best possible care.

Expert support for your physician, better care for your loved one.