

# Aqua Therapy

There's good news for patients who need therapy for an injury or health condition: Union County Hospital (UCH) is now offering aquatic therapy. The aquatic therapy program is offered through the hospital therapy services department, which currently provides physical, occupational and speech therapies.

## Therapy features

Aquatic therapy is provided in a heated pool with temperatures ranging from 92 F to 96 F. The warm water relaxes muscles, increases blood flow and improves joint range of motion.

Having the versatility of therapy in a pool helps people in various ways:

- Movement can become less painful.
- Movement that may be difficult or absent during land-based activities can be accomplished almost effortlessly in the water.
- Enhanced range of motion at the joints, strengthened muscles and reduced stress at joints and muscles make water an optimal exercise environment. This is especially true for individuals who have been injured through trauma, repetitive stress injuries, sports injuries, hip and knee surgery, degenerative conditions of the spine and neurological conditions such as stroke, multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy.

## What are the benefits of aqua therapy?

- Buoyancy: the upward force of the water allows the individual to have less apparent weight than on land. This buoyancy acts as a support for the spine and extremities relieving pain/discomfort during exercise that cannot be achieved on land. It also decreases stress on muscles, joints, discs and bones.
- Resistance/Viscosity: this refers to the internal friction specific to fluid. The faster the movement in water, the more friction/resistance that is created. Since the water surrounds the extremity or body part, strength is developed in all directions of movement. Resistance also increases the body's sensory awareness.

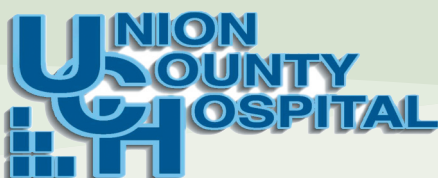
- Hydrostatic Pressure: water exerts pressure on an object that is immersed in the water. Pressure is greater at deeper depths. This pressure benefits individuals who may have swelling in their lower extremities, legs and ankles. It helps to reduce blood pressure in those with hypertension while exercising, and it reduces the perception of pain.
- Heat: aquatic therapy is provided in a heated pool, temperatures ranging from 92 F to 96 F. The warm water relaxes muscles, allows for increased blood flow, and improved joint range of motion.
- Shallow water walking: offers a potential increase in metabolism, balance and coordination; can also contribute to increased strength in atrophied muscles due to an injury, illness, deconditioning or surgery.
- Deep water walking: offers a reduction in force to joints making the activity more pain free; mainly used for back rehabilitation programs to develop muscular and cardiovascular endurance.

## Specialized Equipment

The UCH aqua therapy pool is equipped with multiple pieces of equipment to enhance the program and allow aquatic therapy to be available to a broader patient base. These include a lift with a 500 lbs. weight capacity and 360 degree powered rotation in either direction; an underwater treadmill system; and massage jets.

## How can I participate in aquatic physical or occupational therapy?

A doctor's referral/order is required to participate in aquatic physical or occupational therapy. A licensed physical or occupational therapist will develop an individualized program to meet your needs. For more information, you may call 618-833-9694.



517 North Main • Anna, IL 62906

618-833-4511 • [www.UnionCountyHospital.com/Pool](http://www.UnionCountyHospital.com/Pool)

