



Neonatal Intensive Care: What You Need to Know



The Women's Hospital knows that you are filled with anticipation and excitement about your new baby. We also realize that being admitted to the hospital on bed rest creates fear and concern.

Not all mothers hospitalized during their pregnancy will deliver a baby needing the services of our Bryan Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). However, because your baby might need NICU care, we want to share some information about this special unit. If you have questions after reading this sheet, ask your baby's nurse for more resources or to help connect you with a NICU staff member.

Here are answers to questions that new parents often have about neonatal intensive care:

What will happen if my baby comes early?

If your baby comes early, members of our Bryan NICU team will be at your delivery. A neonatologist (doctor who specializes in newborn care), nurse practitioner (nurse with an advanced degree), respiratory therapist and nurse will be present. You can see your baby briefly, and then your baby will go to the NICU.

When can I see my baby in the NICU?

The nurse and doctor who admit your baby will need time (usually about an hour) to stabilize your baby in the NICU. Your Care Partner must have the baby's bracelet on to gain entry the first time. How long you stay in Labor and Delivery depends on your type of delivery and medications you are taking. If you need to remain in recovery for an extended time, we have iPads to help you "facetime" with your baby.

Who can see my baby?

After your baby is admitted, the NICU Parental Presence and Visitation Policies will be reviewed with you. You can name up to 4 people who can see your baby without your presence. The first time these individuals come to the NICU, they must show their driver's license to receive a bracelet. After this first time, they must have the bracelet on to enter the NICU. If they do not wear the bracelet, they will need to show ID each time they enter the NICU.

You can have 2 additional visitors see your baby each day. A parent must be present at the bedside when daily visitors enter the unit.

We ask that anyone exhibiting signs of a cold or flu not enter the NICU.

Can my other children visit the baby?

Siblings over age 3 can visit the baby. Because of the intensive care environment, sibling visits are limited to 20 minutes once a day. A parent must be present during sibling visits.

Who will take care of my baby?

The NICU team consists of a group of neonatologists, neonatal nurse practitioners, respiratory therapists and nurses. A neonatologist is always on-site. Pediatric specialists are available through GHS Children's Hospital to help with a variety of medical needs.

Who else might be in the NICU?

Social workers help make sure you have everything needed to care for your baby in the NICU and once back home. Lactation consultants help you with breastfeeding issues. NICU Family Support staff members offer educational support and comfort. A child life specialist is available to help your other children adjust to the NICU environment.

What if I live far away from the hospital?

The Ronald McDonald House provides accommodations to parents who have a child in the Children's Hospital. The house is located just across from the hospital on Grove Road. NICU social workers can help you apply for a room there.

How long will my baby be in the NICU?

The length of time depends on how early your baby was born. Most babies born prematurely remain in the NICU until close to their due date. If your baby has other medical concerns, your baby may need to stay longer. Babies born prematurely must be able to maintain their own body temperature, breathe on their own and take enough bottles or breastfeedings to gain weight before they can go home.

What if I have questions about the NICU before my baby arrives?

Several NICU staff members are available to answer your questions. A neonatologist can discuss your baby's growth, development and medical needs. A lactation consultant can visit your room and provide material on pumping and

breastfeeding. A March of Dimes NICU Family Support specialist can share what to expect if your baby does go to the NICU. Please tell your nurse if you would like to speak with any of the NICU staff.

NICU 1: (864) 455-7165

NICU 2: (864) 455-6410

NICU Watts Line: 1-800-277-6428

March of Dimes NICU Family Support: (864) 455-1687

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