

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

Contents

	Page
Welcome	2
Contacting the unit	2
Visiting	2
What to bring for your baby	3
Breastfeeding	4
Daily routine on the ward	4
Facilities on the unit	5
Support for parents	5
Staff on the unit	6
Care your baby will have	6
How we use information about your baby	8
The Neonatal Network	9
Going home from the unit	9
Bereavement	10

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

Welcome

The neonatal unit staff would like to welcome you and your baby to our unit. Our neonatal unit cares for small and sick babies.

If your baby has come to this neonatal unit from another hospital you may find that some of the practices are done slightly differently. Please do not worry about this and speak to your baby's nurse or doctor if you have any concerns.

You can contact the neonatal unit at any time of the day or night for an update on your baby. We will only ever give information to the parents over the phone.

Neonatal Unit: 0121 507 5100.

Visiting

Please do not visit if you have a cold, cough or a tummy bug (diarrhoea and vomiting) as this puts the small baby at risk of infection. Only 2 visitors are allowed at the baby's cot side at any one time, but family members can change over and wait in the children's play room.

The following people can visit the unit, no other visitors will be allowed:

Parents

Parents can visit their baby at any time. You will be asked to leave the unit at nursing handover times (7.30 am and 7.30 pm) and during the doctor's ward round when your baby is not being discussed.

Brother and sisters

Siblings can also visit at any time but must be accompanied by a parent. It is important that other children in the family have access to their new brother or sister.

Grandparents

Grandparents can visit from 3pm – 7pm but must be accompanied by one of the baby's parents and are asked not to hold or touch the baby, to minimise the risk of infection.

Religious contacts

If you would like your baby to be visited by your religious leader or one of our hospital chaplains please speak to the nurse looking after your baby as the visit will need to be arranged by the hospital, and one of the baby's parents will need to be present. In extreme circumstances, if a parent is unable to visit, they can request a visit from a religious leader if the time is critical, but this would only happen under the supervision of staff.

Reducing the risk of infection

Before entering the neonatal unit, please remove your outdoor clothing and place it in the locker provided. When going home at the end of the day please leave the key in the locker

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

so other parents can have use of the locker. Wash your hands, dry them and then use the hand gel.

Always wash your hands before touching your baby, after changing nappies and before feeding baby.

Security

You cannot get onto the neonatal unit unless you press the buzzer and speak to the staff to gain access. Please do not allow anyone to follow you into the unit.

When your baby comes out of the incubator and goes into a cot we will put a security tag on babies leg which will alarm if anybody tries to take them from the unit.

What to bring for your baby

To begin with, please bring the following items in for your baby:

- nappies
- cotton wool balls
- nappy sacks
- olive oil (used to relieve dry skin)

You can bring nappy creams if you wish, but we would only advise that if your baby has a sore bottom.

Clothes

If you would like to bring your baby's own clothes in, please write their name inside and tell the nurse looking after your baby, who will then put a notice up to say that the clothes are their own. You will need to take these home to wash regularly. Please do not bring in expensive items as sometimes clothes get lost.

Toys

If you would like to bring a toy in for your baby please bring in just 1 small toy that has been washed, or a plastic toy which can be wiped easily.

Taking photos

Please feel free to take photographs of your baby. When your baby is admitted the nurses will take a photograph of your baby to give to mother.

Holding your baby

As soon as it is possible the nurses will help you hold your baby. You may feel frightened and think that you might hurt your baby. Do not be worried, even very small babies are

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

tough and it helps them a lot if they are held by their parents. You will always remember the first time you hold your baby, it is a very special time, so do not forget to take lots of photographs of the event.

Breastfeeding

Mums will need to express their breast milk at least 8 times per day, including one expression during the night. On the neonatal unit you can express next to your baby (screens are provided) or there is a private room where you can do this.

Each time you express you will need to use a new bottle, which should be labelled with your baby's name and the time and date it was expressed. The bottle should be kept in the back of the fridge at home and then brought into the unit in a cool bag and given to the nurse who is looking after your baby. If milk cannot be brought in within 48 hours it should be frozen at home and brought in frozen.

Breast pumps are available on the unit for all mums to use. Mums who booked to have their baby at City Hospital may be able to hire a pump from the unit to use at home free of charge which should be returned when your baby is discharged. If you booked to have your baby at another hospital our nursing staff will help you to obtain a pump from them.

The unit also has a breastfeeding advisor who will support you while breastfeeding your baby and the nurses can also give you support with this.

Daily routine on the ward

7.30am	The day nursing team come on duty and the night nurses will update them on how your baby has been overnight. During the day your baby is fed, cared for, given any medicines they may need, given fluids and will have any investigations needed.
9.30am	Doctors see all babies and plan their care. If you want to speak to the senior doctor this is a good time to see them.
1pm - 2pm	Quiet time: the lights will be turned out, the curtains will be closed and the babies will not be disturbed for an hour.
3pm	Grandparents can visit (until 7pm)
5pm	Doctors visit all babies again and review their condition.

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

7.30pm	The night nursing team come on duty and the day nurses will update them on how your baby has been during the day.
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Facilities on the unit

Children's play room

There is a children's play room on the neonatal unit for the use of the baby's brothers and sisters. The toys are cleaned by our staff once a week but please ensure you tidy it up after use.

Food and drink

There is a small kitchenette on the neonatal unit with facilities to make tea, coffee and cold drinks and a fridge to store cold snacks brought in from home. There are no facilities for heating or cooking food. The kitchen is cleaned daily, but please leave it clean and tidy. Please do not bring any food or drinks into the clinical areas.

There are several food outlets at City Hospital which are open at various times; please ask your baby's nurse for more information. There are also several fast food outlets and a supermarket just a short walk from the hospital, on Dudley Road.

Accommodation

There is one family room available on the unit to accommodate a family that has travelled far from home. There is no other accommodation on site for parents but there are various hotels in the local area which can be found on the internet.

When a mother is staying in the family room she will be given a voucher for a complementary breakfast, lunch and dinner from the hospital canteen.

Interpreting

If English is not your first language we can arrange for an interpreter to come to the unit or speak to you over the phone when we need to give you important information about your baby. Alternatively you can use a friend or family member as an interpreter but please remember that some of the information will be very personal and sensitive.

Parent groups

Teaching sessions

The neonatal nurses run teaching sessions twice a month on a Saturday or Sunday where parents and other family members who will be involved in your baby's care can learn about all aspects of your baby's care, prevention of cot death and basic newborn baby resuscitation. If you would like to go, tell the nurse looking after your baby and he/she will book a place

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

for you.

Small Wonders Coffee Club

The 'Small Wonders Coffee Club' is held every Monday, 10.30am - 12.30pm in the parent's sitting room opposite the Serenity Birth Centre in the maternity building. This is an opportunity for any parents with babies on the unit, or whose babies have left the unit to chat about their baby's development, care, safe feeding and any other concerns you may have.

Parent Support Group

The parent support group is made up of parents who have had a baby on the unit and have a lot of experiences that can be shared. If you would like to talk to a member of this group or go to one of the meetings please speak to your baby's nurse who will give you more details, or see the posters around the NNU. You are welcome to join the group either whilst baby is still on the neonatal unit or after they have gone home.

Staff on the unit

Whilst on the neonatal unit your baby will be cared for by doctors, consultants and nurses.

There are approximately 80 nurses who work on the unit, and there can be up to 10 working on any single shift. The nurses are organised into teams and you will be told which team is looking after your baby. You can ask the nurse from your baby's team for any information you need.

If you would like to speak to your baby's doctor you can do this during the morning ward round or ask your baby's nurse to arrange a time when you can speak to them privately.

Meet the matron and consultant

The neonatal unit matron oversees the smooth running of the unit. Every other week an open meeting is held with the neonatal unit matron and consultant, for parents with a baby on the neonatal unit where you can discuss any issues you have. If you have any problems, this is the best time to get them sorted out.

Your baby's care

The care planned for your baby will be discussed with you and recorded in your baby's care plan folder, which is kept near their incubator/cot. The nursing team will also encourage you to get involved in caring for your baby; don't feel that you can't do anything for your baby because they are small or sick.

How you can help

You will be taught how to change your baby's nappy, clean them, care for their mouth, take their temperature, change the oxygen probe, dress your baby, give their medicines and feed

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

them by tube, breastfeeding or alternative methods. These things are known as a baby's 'cares'.

You will become very skilled in all aspects of your baby's care and we will record your progress in the family-centred nursing care plan. After a while you can arrange with your baby's nurse that their cares are left until you come in so that you can do them.

Pain relief for your baby

Babies feel pain just like adults, especially if they are having painful procedures. Your baby will be given pain relief through their drip if needed. If your baby does not have a drip they can be given a sugar liquid (sucrose) before a painful procedure to relieve the pain. Breastmilk can be used as an alternative to sucrose as it has the same effect. If you are worried about your baby feeling pain please discuss this with their nurse. You can find more information about pain relief for your baby in the Bliss parent information guide which you will have been given.

Giving consent for tests and treatments

When your baby is first admitted to the neonatal unit you will be asked to sign a general consent form for routine procedures or a blood transfusion in case your baby needs these. The doctor or nurse will explain these to you before obtaining consent.

However, if your baby needs other specialised tests or treatments the doctors will talk to you about these before they are done. If a procedure needs to be done urgently in an emergency and the doctors feel it is in the best interests of your baby, they will go ahead with the procedure without waiting to talk to you about them first. If you have any concerns about this please speak to your baby's doctor.

You will be given some information leaflets when your baby is first admitted to the unit which will explain some of these procedures, and further leaflets about certain treatments will be given to you if needed.

Neurodevelopmental care

On the neonatal unit we practice neurodevelopmental care, which is a special way to look after babies. It involves nursing them in 'nests' so they are able to push their arms and legs against a barrier which helps their development. We also keep their environment dark and quiet by covering the incubators, keeping the curtains shut and keeping noise to a minimum during 'quiet time' which we have every afternoon. As part of neurodevelopmental care we also encourage you to cuddle your baby. If you would like further information about this please ask the nurses caring for your baby.

The equipment used in the neonatal unit

Your baby may be nursed with some special equipment which may look very complicated and frightening. Your baby's nurse will explain what all of the equipment does and what

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

the wires and tubes are for and you will be given some information leaflets explaining these further. The equipment, wires and tubes will be removed from your baby as soon as they are no longer needed.

Medicines

Some babies will be given medicines to help them recover. Your baby's doctor or nurse will explain what each of these medicines are for. Babies are not given medicines unless it is absolutely necessary.

Weighing baby

Your baby will be weighed every Sunday and Thursday, but some babies need to be weighed every day. Their weight will be recorded on a weight chart which is kept in the white folder with the care plan. The weight is calculated in kilograms and if you ask your nurse they will convert it to pounds and ounces. Do not worry if your baby does not gain weight every time they are weighed, sometimes they can take a little longer to gain weight especially if they have been very poorly.

Testing for infection

Once a week all of the babies are tested for certain infections. This involves taking a stool specimen and a swab of their skin. The results are available in 2-3 days; if you would like to know the results please speak to your baby's nurse.

Eye exams

If your baby is born early or is small they are at risk of having problems with their eyes. These babies will have weekly eye examinations by a specialist Ophthalmologist from the Eye Centre until the doctor is happy there are no problems. If you want to speak to the eye doctor please ask your baby's nurse to arrange this.

How we use and keep information about your baby

When your baby is admitted to the neonatal unit, their details will be added to the neonatal unit database. The only people that have access to this information are the neonatal team and no information about your baby will be given to anyone else without your permission. This is why we will ask you to leave your baby's cot side when other babies are being discussed.

If you or your family are known to social services the nurse will speak to them about your baby; this is routine. If we have any social concerns about your baby we will also contact social services. This is done for the protection and wellbeing of your baby and the nurse will inform you of this.

Care plan

Your baby's care plan will be kept in a white folder near their incubator or cot. This contains

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

information about what care is planned for your baby and what care or treatment has been given. It also contains your baby's discharge care plan. You are encouraged to read the care plan each day to get a thorough update on your baby's care, and the nurse can explain anything you don't understand.

Red books

All babies will be issued with a red book which is their child personal health record. The red book contains lots of useful information about child development and information about your baby will be added to it by the neonatal team. Please take time to read the book, but do not take it home as the nurses need to check it each day.

The book will be kept with baby, and will be sent home with baby when he/she is discharged.

The Neonatal network

City Hospital Neonatal Unit is part of the South West Midlands Neonatal Network. It works with other neonatal units in the region, so that babies can be moved to the unit which provides the most appropriate and specialised care for them. Sometimes babies need to be moved from City hospital to another hospital because they need a treatment or specialist care that can't be provided at City, or because there isn't a cot available. Babies are only moved if it is absolutely necessary.

Moving to another hospital

If your baby needs to be transferred to another hospital they will be taken by a highly skilled team of a doctor, nurse and paramedic in a transport incubator. You will be given information about the unit your baby is being transferred to and how to get to it.

If your baby has to be moved to another hospital for special treatment, they will be brought back to City Hospital as soon as they are well enough and the treatment has finished.

Going home from the unit

We never keep a baby on the neonatal unit for longer than necessary and always aim to get them home as soon as possible (or back to their mother if she is still in hospital). It is difficult to predict the amount of time a baby will need to spend on the unit before being ready to go home. If a baby is born early, they are sometimes ready to go home a couple of weeks before or after the date they were due.

Before your baby is able to go home they will need to be feeding well, maintaining a normal body temperature whilst nursed in a cot and gaining weight and the doctors will need to be happy that the problems have resolved.

You will also need to have done the necessary preparation to make sure you can bring your

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

Neonatal

baby home to a safe environment; unless everything is ready at home you will not be able to take your baby home. If your baby needs any medicines at home you will be taught how to give them.

Bereavement

In some cases some babies do not survive, and we have a bereavement care and support group to help parents get through this very difficult time. If it is known that a baby is not going to survive, he or she can be referred to the Palliative Care Team. This team of specialist nurses can give advice on how to keep your baby comfortable and support parents at this difficult time. We can also arrange for you and your baby to be moved to a hospice rather than stay in the neonatal unit.

Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website:

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

www.swbh.nhs.uk

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

Southern West Midlands Newborn Network, 'The use of sucrose for procedural pain', 2010

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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