

# Welcome to the neonatal unit

Information and advice for parents and carers

## Neonatal

Neonatal unit staff would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your baby/babies.

We recognise that this may be a difficult and sometimes overwhelming time for you. We want you to know that however sick and small your baby is, you, the parent(s) are the most important people in your baby's life.

We will do everything we can to support, inform and guide you throughout your time here.

WiFi is free at City hospital so log in and look at the helpful films and links included in this leaflet.

Here is a short animated film by the NICU Foundation about your role as a parent and what to expect from a stay in neonatal care. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARYFMnXhmLw>

### Concerns and questions

Please talk to your doctor, nurse or ward manager if you have any concerns. We are happy to listen.

Ward round is from 9am every day. This gives you an opportunity to discuss your baby's progress and ask any questions you may have and be part of the decisions made about your baby.

If your baby has been transferred from another hospital you may find that some of our practices are slightly different and this sometimes can cause concern. Please speak to the team about any questions you might have.

If you are away from the neonatal unit and want to find out how your baby is doing you can call as often as you need to 24 hours a day:

**Squirrel** 0121 507 6457

**Hedgehog** 0121 507 5106

**Dragonfly** 0121 507 5092

**Bumblebee** 0121 507 6459

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### Hygiene and Infection Prevention

Before entering the unit please remove outdoor coats (place in the lockers provided). You will need a £1 coin for the locker but you will get this back when you leave.

Wash your hands before entering the unit. When you enter your baby's room please wash your hands again. Always wash your hands before touching your baby, before and after changing nappies and before feeding baby.

Staff and parents are monitored for effective hand hygiene. Please contact a member of the team if you have any concerns.

Anyone who is unwell with a cough, cold, infection or stomach upset should not come to the neonatal unit until they are better. Breastmilk will contain antibodies that fight infections you already have or are exposed to. Keep expressing and providing your breast milk even if you are unwell because it is even more protective for your baby.

Once a week, all of the babies on the unit are tested for infections. This involves taking a stool (poo) sample and also a swab of their skin with cotton wool bud. The results are available in two or three days. If you would like to know the result please speak to your nurse.

Babies on the neonatal unit are more vulnerable to infections so it is important that we reduce the risk of spreading germs. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to staff.

## Visiting

### Parents

Parents are welcome on the unit twenty four hours a day. We would like to encourage you to spend as much time as you can on the unit with your baby. As parents you are more than a 'visitor' you are a vital partner in your baby's care.

We have reclining chairs for you to be by your baby's bed side as long as you wish. You will not be asked to leave your baby unless we need to protect your safety or the safety of others for example during a sterile procedure or X-ray.

### Number of visitors

To maintain a quiet, restful environment and reduce risk of infection two persons may be at the cot side at any one time. There is a family sitting area where family members may wait.

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### Brothers and sisters

Your children are welcome on the neonatal unit at any time. Children must be supervised at all times to keep them safe.

### Grandparents

Grandparents can visit from 1pm to 7pm but must be accompanied by one of the baby's parents.

### Nominated support person

In the long term absence of a parent you are welcome to nominate a support person. This must be discussed with the sister in charge and a nominated person agreed and documented in your baby's notes. This should be the same person.

### Getting here

#### Car Parking is FREE for Parents

You will need to get a car parking form from the neonatal unit office. Take the form to the Birmingham treatment centre (BTC) front desk with a £5 deposit and they will give you a swipe card to let you in and out of the public car park. When you no longer need the swipe card, return it to BTC and they will return your deposit. The main visitor car park can be accessed from Western Road.

#### Public Transport

Buses 11A/11C, 80/80A, 82, 87 and 89 stop at City Hospital. To plan your journey you can visit

<https://www.wmnetwork.co.uk/> (Accessed 29/06/2020).

The neonatal unit is in the maternity block which is signposted on the hospital site.

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### Gaining access to the neonatal unit

To enter and leave the neonatal unit you must press the buzzer or speak to the ward clerk behind the glass window. Staff will check your details and who you have come to see, before letting you in.

For the safety and security of your baby, please do not let any other person come in the door behind you.

#### Getting involved in your baby's care

Doing as much as you can for baby will help the bond between you develop and being involved in your baby's care has positive outcomes on the health. Time spent with your baby especially when they are in skin to skin contact releases oxytocin the love hormone. Oxytocin supports brain development, oxygenation and growth.

Support you can give from birth which will boost Oxytocin from admission:

- Hold your baby in skin to skin contact
- Touch your baby using containment holding
- Express your colostrum/breast milk
- Read, talk and sing to your baby
- vCreate TV:

vCreate is a secure video messaging service that enables the nursing team to send you short videos and photos of your baby, during those times when you are unable to be on the unit. Its aim is to provide you with some reassurance and to minimise any separation anxiety you are experiencing. Speak to the ward clerks or your nurse about accessing vCreate.

And then when you are ready we can teach you to:

- Change your baby's nappy
- Wash and change them
- Take their temperature
- Give feeds
- Bathe them
- Give medication

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### What to bring in for your baby

Toiletries:

- Nappies
- Cotton wool balls
- Nappy sacks

Olive oil purchased from a pharmacy can be used on your baby's skin if it is needed. Do not use extra virgin oils as they have not been heat treated. We do not recommend using any body wash, baby bath or baby lotions on your baby's delicate skin.

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

### Clothes

If you would like to bring in clothes for your baby, please wash them first, even if they are new. Label all items of clothing. You will need to take these items home to wash regularly. Occasionally if heavily soiled we may need to put items in the hospital laundry. Clothing can go missing so please do not buy expensive items.

### Toys

If you would like to bring in a toy for your baby please bring in just one small toy that has been washed or a plastic toy which can be washed easily. When your baby goes home to promote safe sleep there should be no toys in the space where they sleep.

### Breastmilk and feeding your baby

Breastmilk is medicine for infants born sick and preterm. Small drops of colostrum expressed early and given to your baby are packed with millions of protective factors which will reduce the risk of infection and disease.

All staff in maternity and neonatal is trained to support you with expressing and breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is normal and natural but it is not away easy especially when babies are sick and preterm so please contact the feeding team for extra advice and support. Donor expressed breastmilk may be available to support mums own milk supply for babies who meet the criteria.

### Breast pumps:

In hospital: Pumps are available to use on the neonatal unit and postnatal wards. Your nurse will show you how to use the pump including safe cleaning of equipment and storage of breastmilk.

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At home: Electric breast pumps can be borrowed free of charge while your baby is on the neonatal unit to use at home. Your nurse can contact the infant feeding team who will loan you a pump.

There is a dedicated expressing room for expressing milk and cleaning your pump equipment. Breast pumps are available in all rooms so that you can express next to your baby.

Midland Free wheelers: The neonatal team and the infant feeding team can call this charity to transport your baby's milk to the hospital where they need it if you are not able to. They can also bring you bottles, labels and breast pumps but speak to the infant feeding team/NNU first to arrange delivery of equipment. We will provide you with tamper evident bags and tags to put your expressed milk bottles into before they are transported by the free wheelers.

Feeding team contact details:

**Carmen Nuttall 07866004667 Infant feeding team 07816061633**

We are a small team of infant feeding specialists including a lactation consultant. We can arrange to meet you on the neonatal unit as well as supporting you over the phone. Support is for all methods of feeding including breast, bottle or combination.

### Parents facilities

**There is a parent's kitchen with a microwave and facilities to make hot and cold drinks. There is a small sitting area and play area for families. There is a separate sitting area and kitchen away from the neonatal unit opposite Serenity suite that can also be used. Please ask staff for the code for this area.**

We have 3-4 parent bedrooms which can be used at any time while your baby is on the neonatal unit. If they are available you can use the rooms for a short time if you need a sleep or shower not just for staying overnight.

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### Hospital Services

#### Food Outlets

There is a small coffee shop open Monday to Friday in the maternity reception area. Arches Café in the main hospital building is open 7 days a week 8am to 9pm. Birmingham treatment centre also has a coffee shop serving snacks open 8 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday. Vouchers are available to put towards food and drink for parents staying on the neonatal unit. Ask the nurse about food vouchers.

#### Cash Point

There is a cash point in the main hospital building on the ground floor by pharmacy.

### Emotional support

If you are feeling low speak to your GP about accessing support at any time. Postnatal depression, anxiety and trauma are more common amongst mothers and fathers who have had a baby on the neonatal unit. Do not suffer in silence.

If you have experienced birth trauma we can arrange support from our consultant midwife or wellbeing midwifery team.

If you want to talk about how you are feeling with a member of the team in private we have a quiet room available for this.

Bereavement support is available to support parents during and after a loss. We help parents in creating memories and work closely with hospices and faith leaders to provide specific support for families.

Religious and spiritual support is available from the hospital chaplaincy team

Telephone: 0121 507 5051

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### Further Information

#### Best beginnings

We work to engage, equip, educate and empower parents, from conception, to maximise their children's life chances. We work to help parents build knowledge and confidence to support their own well-being and their children's long-term physical, mental and emotional development.

<https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/small-wonders> (Accessed 29 June 2020)

#### BLISS

Bliss' vision is that every baby born premature or sick in the UK has the best chance of survival and quality of life.

<https://www.bliss.org.uk/> (Accessed 29 June 2020)

#### First steps nutrition trust

An independent public health nutrition charity that provides information and resources to support eating well from pre-conception to five years.

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers> (Accessed 29 June 2020)

#### Human Milk

Website for informing parents and society at large of the surprising content and workings of human milk. We hope that parents-to-be will find useful information here to help them decide how they would like to feed their baby, and that new and established breastfeeding parents will be inspired by knowing more about what they are providing for their child.

<https://www.human-milk.com/> (Accessed 29 June 2020)

#### Necrotising Enterocolitis

NEC UK is a registered charity for the condition Necrotising Enterocolitis (NEC). Our organisation is parent led and supported by a multidisciplinary team of medical advisers.

<https://www.necuk.org.uk/> (Accessed 29 June 2020)

#### Southern West Midlands Neonatal Operational Delivery Network

This website is designed to give you information about neonatal care, your role as a parent of a premature or ill baby, and what help is available for your baby, you, and your family.

<http://swmnodn.org.uk/media/> (Accessed 29 June 2020)



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### The lullaby trust

Reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) for premature babies.

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/premature-babies/> (Accessed 29 June 2020)

**Unicef (2019)** You and your baby: supporting love and nurture on the neonatal unit.

Available at:

[https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/08/neonatal\\_leaflet\\_online.pdf](https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/08/neonatal_leaflet_online.pdf) (Accessed 29 June 2020)

### Sources used in this leaflet

The Neo-natal intensive care unit (NICU) Foundation (2019) A stay in neonatal care: an animated guide. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARYFMnXhmLw> (Accessed: 1 July 2020)

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email [swbh.library@nhs.net](mailto:swbh.library@nhs.net).



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Incorporating City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis Hospitals  
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ML6210

Issue Date September 2020

Review Date: September 2023