


# NICU FAMILY GUIDE



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## **Congratulations on the birth of your baby!**

Welcome to Sanford Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). We invite you to take a look into our unit. We are here for you and we want to help you. We consider it a privilege to care for your family.

This Family Guide was created to provide you with needed information while your baby is in our care. We know this can be a very hard time. Our team is here to care for your baby and to support your family.

If you have any questions please ask any one of our staff. We hope your stay is comfortable. Please let us know how we can best serve you.

Children's Hospital NICU Staff



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# Keeping Your Baby Safe

Your baby's safety is important to us. As a team, we will work together to keep your baby safe while he or she is in our care. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask a member of your baby's healthcare team.

## Preventing Falls

- In individual rooms, leave the curtain or door open so the staff can see your baby.
- You **must** be awake at all times when you are holding your baby. If you start to feel sleepy, put your baby back in their bed. Your baby's nurse can help you.
- Put the side rails up and/or make sure the isolette doors are closed securely. This will keep your baby safe and prevent them from falling.
- Do not carry your baby while walking in the NICU. They need to be placed in a crib or belted in a stroller.
- If your baby is in a bouncer or baby seat, they **must** be belted at all times.

## Safety

- The doors to the NICU are locked at all times to protect your baby. Your baby's nurse will explain what you will need to do to come in to the NICU.
- Your baby's nurse will explain how to call for help. If you need help with your baby, please let your baby's nurse or any nurse know. Ask for help at any time.
- The baby's siblings are welcome to visit according to the unit guidelines. They **must** be supervised at all times. Do not leave them alone in the waiting rooms or reception areas.
- Smoking, drug use, and drinking alcohol are **not allowed anywhere** in the Sanford Medical Center.

## Security

- All NICU staff have a baby image in the upper right hand corner on the name badge. It is important to make sure that the staff member taking care of your baby has this image on their badge. Only staff with this image should care for your baby.

- When you are calling in for updates or information about your baby, you will be asked to first give the private parent security code or the ID number on your bands that was given to you when your baby was first admitted to the NICU.
- When you come to visit your baby, you must wear your parent badge or ID band.
  - Visitors for your baby
    - Must have visitor ID or state issued ID.
    - Your visitors must have your permission to visit.
- Check with your baby’s nurse to see if you must be present when visitors come to visit your baby.
- Leave **all** guns, knives, or other such items at home. Do **not** bring **any** weapons into the NICU.

## Infection

It is important to keep your baby safe from an infection.

Talk with your baby’s nurse about how you can help.

- Remove all jewelry from your hands and wrists.
- Wash your hands from your fingertips to your elbows. Good hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.
  - The first visit of the day, you will need to scrub with a special soap for several minutes.
  - If you remain at the hospital, but leave the NICU, you will only need to do a thorough hand washing.
  - All visitors **must** wash their hands before coming in the NICU.
- **Always** wash your hands between diaper changes and feedings.
- Signs of illness
  - Let your baby’s nurse know you or your visitor may be ill.
  - Parents and guests may be asked about their health before holding your baby.
  - Visitors may not be able to visit if they are ill.
  - If you have a cold, you may need to wear a mask or gown when coming in to the NICU.

- Some things are **not** allowed at your baby's bedside.
  - o Food
  - o Fresh flowers
  - o Live plants
  - o Latex balloons – only Mylar are allowed
- Toys and books may be brought in from home. These must be:
  - o Clean and be able to be cleaned while at your baby's bedside.
  - o Not breakable
  - o Not valuable
  - o Stuffed animals will be kept outside of your baby's bed.

## **Equipment**

Your baby may be surrounded by lots of equipment. You will hear different sounds and alarms. We know this can be scary. It is important to talk with your baby's nurse about the different equipment and alarms. Your baby's nurse will explain why your baby needs specific equipment and how it will help.

Some equipment you **may** see:

- A monitor that measures your baby's:
  - o Heart rate
  - o Breathing rate
  - o Blood pressure
  - o Oxygen level
- IV pumps
- Breathing machines

# Protecting Your Baby's Information

All information about the babies in the NICU is confidential. Your baby and family have a right to individual privacy. We have guidelines in place to ensure that only you and those you wish will receive information about your baby.

## What you need to know

- Only you, the parent will be given information or updates about your baby.
- No information will be given to any visitors or other family members.
- The staff is not able to give any information and answer questions about any of the other babies in the NICU.
- You need to stay by your baby's bedside only.
- Nurse to nurse report and updates may be done at the bedside. If this kind of nurse to nurse report is done, you are welcome to take part in these updates. Check with your baby's nurse to see if you are able to remain at the bedside. If you are not able to be there:
  - o Your baby's nurse will update you on your baby's plan of care.
  - o You can talk with your baby's provider for updates.
  - o You can call the NICU for updates.
    - You will be asked your password or ID band number before receiving information.
- You **may** be asked to leave the unit during the admission of another critically ill baby or procedures on another baby.
- If your baby has a **significant** change in his or her status, and you are not at the hospital, we will try to contact you.

## Patient Rights and Responsibilities

You will be given a Patient Rights and Responsibilities booklet. If you have any questions about this information, please ask your baby's nurse.

# Unit Guidelines

## Spending Time with Your Baby

It is important that you and your family spend time with your baby. We need your help in guiding your visitors about your baby's needs while in the NICU. It is important that the NICU be a quiet, calming, and safe environment.

- As parents, you are welcome anytime. You may stay as long as you would like.
  - You **may** be asked to step out of the NICU during:
    - Report time
    - Admission of a patient
    - During procedures on another baby
- All visitors must be healthy and **not** be sick. Visitors who are sick, (for example, but not limited to, a cold, fever, or infection) will not be allowed to visit the NICU. If you are not sure, please ask your baby's nurse.
- It is important to only have a few visitors at one time at the bedside. Your baby's nurse will let you know how many visitors may be at the bedside. This helps to keep a calming environment for your baby.
- Brothers and sisters of the baby may visit.
  - Some NICUs may have a Child Life specialist available to help explain about the NICU.
  - Children must stay at the bedside.
  - Children must be with an adult at all times.
  - We may ask some health questions to see if they might be sick or have been exposed to an illness.
  - Seasonal limitations for visitation may be put in place.

## Use of Cell Phones

- You must wipe off your cell phone with a disinfectant wipe. You may be asked to place your cell phone in a clear plastic baggie which will be provided for you.
- Place your cell phone on vibrate **before** coming in the NICU.
- Wash your hands after using your cell phone and before touching your baby.



- Do **not** use your cell phone for phone calls and texting next to **any** medical equipment at your baby's bedside.
- No still pictures or video recording is allowed during procedures.

## **Food and Drink in the NICU**

It is important that you stay hydrated. If you bring in something to drink, it must be in a covered container. Check with your baby's nurse about what types of drinks are allowed. **No** food is allowed at your baby's bedside.

## **Your Baby's Healthcare Team**

Your baby will be cared for by a team of people. This team includes **you**. We are all working together to care for your baby. This team **may** include:

- Parents – you are the most important member of the team. We want your input about the care and needs for your baby.
- Bedside Nurse – a nurse will be assigned to care for your baby during both the day and night. Your baby will have a different nurse on each shift. They get report about your baby before the start of their shift. Your baby's nurse will:
  - o Care for your baby.
  - o Keep you updated on how your baby is doing.
  - o Help you learn how to care for your baby.
  - o Answer your questions.
  - o Keep the providers updated on how your baby is doing.
- Case Manager/Discharge Coordinator – helps you plan and get ready to take your baby home. This includes education and resources.
- Charge Nurse/Clinical Care Leader – this nurse is responsible to oversee the staff and patients. The charge nurse is the person you would talk to if you have any concerns about the care your baby is getting.
- Neonatologist – this doctor has special training in the care of sick and premature babies.
- Nurse Practitioner – this nurse has special training in the care of ill or premature babies. They work under direct supervision of the neonatologist.



- Physician Assistant (PA) - has special training in the care of ill or premature babies. They work under direct supervision of the neonatologist.
- Lactation Counselor and Consultants will help you with:
  - o Learning about breastfeeding
  - o Establishing your breastfeeding
  - o Answer your questions
  - o Support you with breastfeeding
- Respiratory Therapist provides direct care for all your baby's breathing needs.
- Occupational/Speech/Physical/Developmental Therapist work with you and your baby with a focus on your baby's:
  - o Feedings
  - o Positioning
  - o Developmental progress
- Social Worker – provide information on needed resources for you and your baby.
- Chaplain – provides spiritual support.
- Child Life Specialist – helps to give support and guidance to parents, siblings, and other family members about baby's stay in the NICU.
- Other specialists – provide special services your baby may need.



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