

Welcome to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, entrances, visitors allowed, services and access points may be changed.

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Next Review: May, 2026

WELCOME TO NICU

The NICU is located on the 2nd floor of Women's Hospital, 665 William Avenue.

There are five areas called **Pods**. In the pods, there are 8 individual rooms and 2 double rooms. A double room is where a room could be shared with another baby.

FOR YOUR COMFORT

The NICU Family Zone has a "kitchen" area where you may eat meals. You may also sit in the Family Hallway. If you have any food allergies, please be aware that we cannot guarantee these areas will be free from allergens.

Food is not allowed in your baby's room and food and beverages cannot be stored in the fridge in your baby's room. Please use a small cooler or lunch bag for your food. Food may be stored in the fridge in the Family Zone. Please label your fridge items. Beverages may be taken into your baby's room, but they must be covered and kept to the family area of the room, away from baby's bed and medical equipment. Hot beverages **MUST** be in a sealed travel mug.

There are many places to relax and take a break. There is a rooftop garden on the fourth floor for staff and families. There are sitting areas throughout the Family Area of the unit. There are also comfortable sitting areas on the main floor. There is also a small play area for your other children.

RONALD MCDONALD FAMILY ROOM

On the 3rd floor of the CS Wing in Children's Hospital (Yellow Deer Zone) you can find the Ronald McDonald Family Room. It is a place for families to relax and take a break from the hospital environment. The Family Room features a large living space with a TV, children's play area, laundry facilities, WIFI access, shower facilities and a full kitchen.

Lunches are served to families on certain days. All families and their visitors are welcome to use it from 9:00am to 5:00pm daily.

Three sleeping rooms are available on a priority basis to families in PICU, NICU and other areas of Children's Hospital if space permits.

Rooms are reserved for families with the most critical need and cannot be booked in advance or for any length of time. There is no charge to use the sleeping rooms. To receive a referral, you must talk to the charge nurse or social worker.

CAFETERIAS

The 24-Hour Food Court is in the General Hospital on the 2nd Floor (Green Owl Zone) and operates 7 days a week. There is also a Food Kiosk on the first floor of the Women's Hospital with limited hours. The vending machines and microwaves are available 24 hours a day.

PARKING

Women's Hospital has an underground parkade. The entrance is on Sherbrook Street. There are more parkades on Sherbrook Street, William Avenue, Emily Street and Tecumseh Street. If your baby is going to be in the hospital for more than 3 days, you might want to buy a parking pass. You can get these at the Parking Office located at the 820 Sherbrook Street entrance.

SHOWERS

There is a shower available for you to use in the Family Hallway. Please use your own towels and shampoo and soap.

YOUR PRESENCE IN THE UNIT

We want to make sure that you learn as much as you can about your baby. We welcome all your questions. You are a part of the care team, and we expect you to ask questions. Asking questions helps us to help you understand everything about your baby.

You should not be in the Unit if you are sick. If you feel unwell, call your bedside nurse before coming in to check if it's safe for you to be present.

We recommend that if you are not well, or if you are feeling you need a break, stay home and rest. Your baby needs you healthy and strong, so self-care is very important. You can always call to check and get updates.

When you come to the unit, please use the intercom on the wall outside the entrance to NICU – tell us your name and your baby's name and we will unlock the door for you. Please understand that this is for safety reasons, to make sure we are only allowing parents into the Unit.

You must sign in at the desk and sign out when you leave. You should also have your identification (ID) with you, just in case.

You will be assigned a coloured bracelet that grants you access inside the hospital. This bracelet does not serve as your ID, so it is important to either have your white hospital ID bracelet or other ID with you.

Please DO NOT REMOVE your coloured bracelet. You must always wear it.

CAN I BRING MY OTHER CHILDREN?

Yes, you can bring your other children. However, restrictions for younger children exist at certain times.

Please check with us before you bring your other children inside the Unit.

You can help your other children by explaining what is happening, that baby is sick and needs to get better.

You can decide how and how much you want to tell them because you know them best. It may be helpful for them to draw pictures to put in your baby's room.

FAMILY SUPPORT

We have volunteer veteran parents who have experience with having a baby in NICU. They are here to support you. They can answer questions, give you some advice, or talk to you when you need some care. They will help make your stay in the unit a bit better.

HOW CAN I GET HELP?

If you have concerns, we encourage you to talk to:

- Your child's nurse or the nurse in charge.
- The Patient Care Manager
- Your child's doctor
- Patient Representative
- Social Work
- Spiritual Health

Indigenous Health

Services are offered to Indigenous patients by people who:

- Interpret
- Support and teach
- Counsel and refer
- Meet cultural and spiritual needs
- Journey with you

If you wish to bring in your own Indigenous Advisors or Traditional Healers, please let us know.

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY?

Be with your baby as much as possible.

You are very important to your baby. Talking, singing, reading will help soothe your baby. Kangaroo care (skin to skin) and hand hugging are ways for you to care for your baby. Speak with your nurse to learn more about holding your baby.

Participate in rounds. You are part of the team that makes decisions about your baby. We value your thoughts and opinions. You know your baby best and your thoughts and questions are very important to us.

Keep your baby's room a quiet, peaceful space. Babies in NICU can be very sensitive to light and noise. Play music on a quiet volume, lower your voices and keep your electronics on low volume. There is a light dimmer switch on the Family side of the room. While you are in the room you may have the lights on. You can control the brightness of the room.

Participate in your baby's care. There are many things you can do for your baby. Talk to your bedside nurse for support with this.