

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Health Sciences Centre (HSC)

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

On behalf of Shared Health and HSC Winnipeg, we would like welcome you and your baby to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). We are here to support you during this stressful time. In addition to providing the specialized care that your baby needs, it is our pleasure to provide you – our family partners – with information and support. You are welcome to call the NICU at any time: 204-787-5907.

As parents and/or guardians, you are an important part of our care team. Here are some things you can do to help your baby in the NICU.

Be part of your baby's care

Your active involvement in your baby's hands-on care will improve their neurodevelopmental outcomes. You are an equal partner with the team in the unit, and the constant in your baby's life. You have a healing touch and know your baby better than anyone, so we encourage you to stay with them as much as possible, while providing as much hands-on care as you are able. Your NICU care team will let you know the different ways you can participate in your baby's care needs, including skin-to-skin care (also known as Kangaroo Care), breastfeeding, as well as reading, talking, and singing to your baby, which has been proven to improve baby's health and development.

Take care of yourself and your family—WE are here to support YOU

This can be a stressful and overwhelming time for you and your family. It is important that you take care of yourself and each other. Please speak to your care team to find the routine that works best for you and your family.

Advocate and ask questions

We are here to answer any questions you may have during our time supporting you and your baby.. It is important for you to understand what is happening with your baby, the progress that your baby has made, and their future care plans, so please don't hesitate to ask questions of any member of your care team. Similarly, it is important to let us know if you have any concerns, so that we can make the appropriate changes.

Begin expressing your milk early

When it comes to expressing your breastmilk, earlier is better. A combination of manual expression and frequent electric pumping will give your baby the best chances of receiving sufficient volumes of breastmilk from you. Your daily volumes will improve from one week after delivery and beyond. We are happy to provide guidance for you along with all the supplies and storage you require while pumping.

Milestones in your journey –transferring to another NICU or the Child Health Program

Our goal is to get you and your baby home safely, as soon as possible. It is important to know that not all babies' journeys will look the same and some babies will achieve different milestones in different areas or hospitals other than HSC's NICU. When babies no longer need the high level of care provided by HSC's NICU, they are often transferred to one of our excellent partner units or hospitals.

There are two NICUs in Winnipeg, HSC and St. Boniface. Your care team may determine that a transfer to St. Boniface is necessary to continue your NICU journey.

If your baby no longer needs the care of the NICU, but still requires care that is only available in a hospital, your baby may be transferred to HSC Children's Hospital, under the care of a pediatrician or to an appropriate facility closer to your home, if you live outside of Winnipeg. This could include ongoing care at the Brandon Regional Health Centre or the Thompson General Hospital once your care team has determined that your baby's medical needs can be met at another facility.

Whatever the individual circumstances of your baby, please know that we are all committed to providing the best possible care, in the most appropriate location.

We hope that your family's time in our care is as comfortable as possible. We are here to support you and your baby throughout your stay, so please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Narvey FRCPC FAAP
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Medical Director- Child Health Transport Team

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Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and CH/WH Respiratory Therapy