

Being Near Your Baby

When your baby is in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Congratulations on the birth of your child! We feel privileged to be part of your birth experience and this important time in your family's life. Thank you for trusting us to care for you and your baby.

Why is my baby on another unit?

Sometimes we have to take special measures to help moms and babies recover and become stronger after birth. This can mean that they need to be on separate hospital units for a while.

Right now, your baby is being cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) while you are recovering on the Mother Baby Unit. The NICU is a special unit that cares for newborn babies who need extra medical attention. The NICU has advanced technology and trained staff who are providing expert care for your baby.



Right now, your baby is being cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in the hospital.

Please know that we want you to be with your baby as much as possible. We also want to help you to recover fully and quickly.

How can I visit my baby in the NICU?

Most times, a mother's first visit to the NICU is:

- After delivery
- Before you move to the Mother Baby Unit (MBU)
- With your labor nurse

When you and your baby are ready for a 2nd visit, your Mother Baby Unit (MBU) nurse or patient care technician will take you to the NICU. Even if you feel you can walk, we will take you in a wheelchair. This is for your safety.

After that, you may be able to travel to the NICU with just your family. We will show you and your family how to find the NICU entrance in the Montlake Tower.

When you leave the MBU to visit your baby in the NICU:

- **Sign out** at the MBU front desk. Write down the time you plan to return.
- When you return to the MBU, **sign in**. This way, we will be able to tell your visitors where you are, as needed.

The NICU Patient Service Specialist will help you and your family learn about the unit. They will give you information about the visitors' policy, security, health, handwashing practices, and family facilities.

Can I visit my baby at any time?

In the MBU, we do safety checks every time the nurses start a new shift. Please make sure you are on the MBU at these times. Both the nurse who has been caring for you and the nurse who is starting the next shift must see and talk with you during these safety checks. These checks are especially important if you are spending time away from the unit.

Your Care and Recovery

Before you leave the MBU to visit your baby, your nurse will talk with you about your plan of care for pain control and other medicines. We will do this each time you leave the MBU.

Your nurse will also make a plan for checking your vital signs and pumping breast milk. These tasks need to be done while you are in your room in the MBU.

This planning of your day helps us support your recovery. It also helps us know how often you can safely leave the MBU to visit the NICU.

It may be hard to think about your own care needs when your baby is in the NICU. But, please remember that:

- You must take regular naps and rest time for yourself so that you can get healthy and strong, and be able to care for your baby.
- Keeping your pain under control will help your recovery. Do not go for long periods without your pain medicines. This is especially important if you have had a Cesarean birth.

Can the NICU nurses provide my care when I'm visiting my baby?

The NICU nurses caring for your baby are not obstetric nurses. They cannot provide your care while you are in the NICU.

We will give your baby's NICU nurse your MBU nurse's phone number. Please call your MBU nurse if you have concerns while you are visiting the NICU. **If you feel even a little unwell, call your nurse or return to the MBU.**

If You Are Not Well

If your vital signs, blood sugars, and pain are not well controlled, we may work with you to create a plan for you to visit the NICU for shorter periods.

If you have a family member with a device for Skype or FaceTime, they can give you some "virtual" baby time by dialing your phone from the NICU. The NICU nurse can help them choose a good time to do this.

The MBU nurse manager, assistant manager, or the charge nurses will check with you to make sure we are meeting your need to be with your child.

Finding the MBU and NICU

- **Getting to the MBU:** From the main entrance of the hospital (3rd floor), turn right. Take the Pacific elevators to the 5th floor.
- **Getting to the NICU:** From the main entrance of the hospital (3rd floor), turn left. When you reach the Gift Shop, turn right and go down the hallway to the the Montlake Tower. Take the Montlake elevators to the 4th floor.

Now, please go back to the Table of Contents of this workbook and check the box so your nurses will know you have read this chapter.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your healthcare provider if you have questions about visiting your baby in the NICU.