

Keeping the NICU Clean and Safe

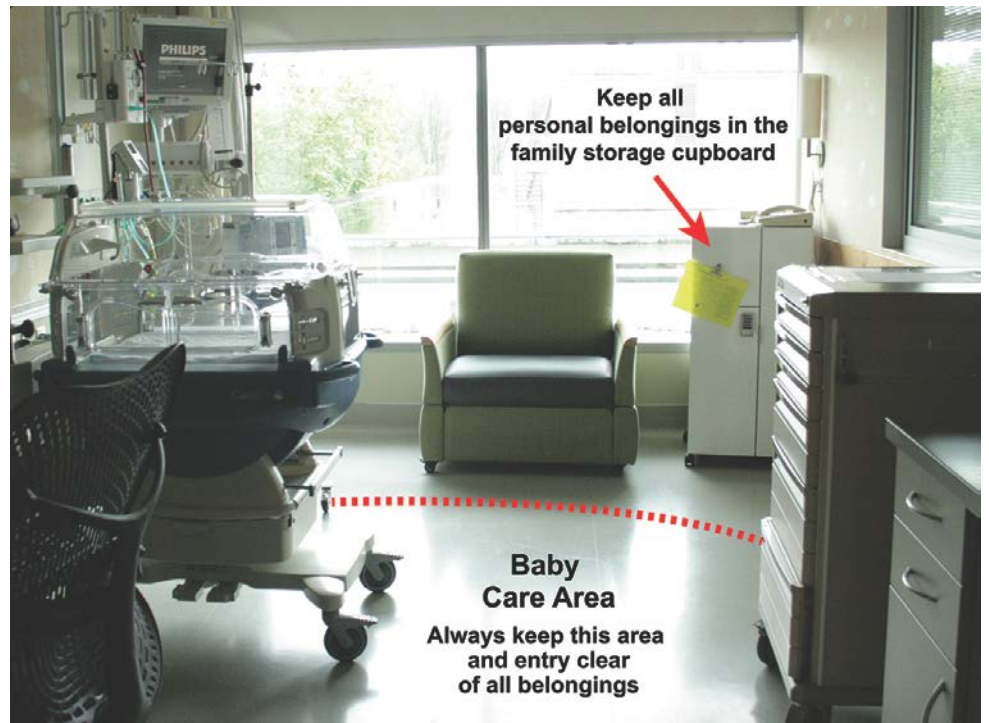
Our Code of Conduct for designated visitors

This handout is for “designated visitors” to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Designated visitors are named by the baby’s family. They visit the baby and receive updates about the baby’s care when the parents are not able to be here. Designated visitors must sign a special consent form.

Our top priority is the care and safety of our NICU babies.

We know that spending time in the NICU can be very stressful. Our NICU Code of Conduct was created to provide clarity and consistency for our families and visitors. By following this Code of Conduct, NICU staff, families, and visitors all work together. We create a safe and positive environment, keep NICU babies safe, and help them receive the best possible care.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about this Code of Conduct.



For baby’s care and safety, some areas in the baby’s room must be kept clear. Please keep all of your personal belongings in the storage cupboard.



“I wish someone had told me that even with all of the hard days and sadness, there is truly something wonderful and magical about the NICU. It can be a really wonderful place.”

– Lucy’s Mom

Safety

- Doctors and nurses must be able to get to the baby easily. Always make sure the entry into the baby’s room and the area around the baby’s bed are completely clear of all personal belongings (see “Baby Care Area” in the photo on page 1).
- You must be willing to step outside the room when asked by the nurse or doctor. This may happen at any time day or night, when treatment is needed or if there is a medical emergency,
- Hold the baby **only** when you are sitting in a chair that does **NOT** have wheels.
- It’s easy to become drowsy while holding the baby. We will wake you or move the baby back to their incubator or bassinet if you start to fall asleep while holding the baby.
- **Never turn off alarms in the baby’s room.** Alarms tell us when the baby might need help.
- Most medical equipment is meant to be used by trained medical professionals. Please ask the nurse before using any equipment in the baby’s room.
- Do **not** wear perfume, aftershave, or other scented products when you plan to visit the hospital.
- For safety and infection control, you must have shoes on your feet when walking in the NICU.

Preventing Infection

Premature and ill infants are at risk for infections. To help prevent infection in the NICU, please do **not** come to the NICU when you are ill.

If you are sick, you must stay home until you have been free of symptoms for at least 24 hours. If you have questions, please talk with the Charge Nurse.

Daily Health Screening

Even minor cold symptoms can be a serious health risk to premature infants. To keep all the babies safe, we screen everyone for health concerns before they enter the NICU. You will answer a short health survey every day that you visit the NICU.

We may ask you more questions about your health if we know that colds, flu, and other illnesses are active in the hospital and community.



Everyone who visits the NICU must wash their hands and arms up to the elbows before they enter the unit.

Hand Washing

Everyone who visits the NICU must wash their hands and arms up to the elbows before they enter the unit. Scrub sinks are at the front and rear entrances of the NICU. Since you will need to remove any jewelry from your wrists and hands, it is best to leave valuables at home.

Please:

- Remove any jewelry from your wrists and hands. Do not put the jewelry back on until you leave the NICU.
- If you have long sleeves, roll them up above your elbows.
- Wash your hands and arms to your elbows with soap and water for at least 30 seconds.
- Then, when you enter the baby's room, wash or gel your hands again before you touch the baby.
- After touching the baby, wash or gel again.
- If you do not see staff, providers, or other hospital staff wash or gel our hands before touching the baby, please feel free to remind us.

Keeping the Baby's Room Clean

- Always keep countertops, tables, and sinks free of personal items. Keep all belongings in the storage cupboard.
- Our environmental services staff must be able to clean and disinfect the baby's room every day. To allow them to do this important work, please:
 - Put all personal belongings in the small storage cupboard by 10 a.m. each morning. This includes all items that do not belong to the hospital, and small food items that do not need to be refrigerated.
 - Put food in a tightly closed container before you place it in the cupboard. Keep food items to a minimum.
 - Keep the floor and window sill clear.

Meals

Please eat only in the visitors' lounge, cafeteria, or other seating areas around the hospital.

Courtesy for Others

- If you have a concern during your time in the NICU, please talk directly with the baby's nurse. If you cannot talk with the baby's nurse, ask to talk with the charge nurse or the nurse manager. Speak calmly so that we can work together to meet your needs.

- We do not allow yelling, using threats, or abusive language in the NICU. If anyone's behavior causes concern for staff, hospital Security will be called and they will be asked to leave.
- Do not use drugs or drink alcohol in the NICU.
- Do not engage in sexual activity in the NICU.

Respecting Others' Privacy

Please respect the privacy of care providers and others in the NICU:

- Ask for their permission if you would like to take a picture or a video that may contain a nurse, doctor, or other staff member.
- Never take a photo or video of other families, babies, or another baby's name card.

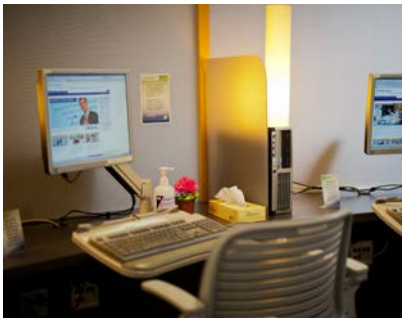
Cell Phones

- You may use your cell phone in the NICU, but put the ringer in silent or vibration mode. A ringing phone can disturb the baby or other patients.
- When talking on the phone, speak quietly. If you will be talking on your cell phone for a long time, please consider having your conversation outside the baby's room.
- Please consider limiting your cell phone use while you are in the NICU. If you must make or receive a call:
 - Find a private area to talk, away from the baby and other patients.
 - Be at least 3 feet (an arm's length) away from all medical equipment.
- You may text, read emails, use personal tablets or laptops, and search the internet in the baby's room.
- Do not use cell phones or personal electronics while holding the baby.
- Use Wi-Fi or airplane mode whenever you can. You can easily log on to free Wi-Fi while you are in the hospital.

Infection Control

Please be aware that **cell phones and other electronic devices have many germs on them.** This means that they can expose the baby to illness. To protect the baby and others in the NICU:

- Use an alcohol wipe to wipe down your cell phone when you enter the baby's room. You can find wipes next to the sink in the room.
- After you sanitize your hands and are visiting with the baby, do **not** use your cell phone.
- If you do touch your cell phone while you are visiting the baby, please wash or gel your hands again.



The Health Information Resource Center is on the 3rd floor of the hospital, next to the Gift Shop.

- If you use personal tablets or laptops in the baby’s room, always remember to wash your hands or use gel after touching or using them.

Personal Belongings

- You are responsible for your own belongings at all times.
- Do not leave any belongings unattended in the NICU.
- Keep all personal belongings inside the small storage cupboard in the baby’s room. It is very important to keep the entry area and the Baby Care Area clear (see photo on page 1).

About the NICU Family Lounge

The Family Lounge is **only** for parents and siblings of NICU babies. Designated visitors, other family members, and friends should use the NICU waiting room or other facilities in the hospital.

Waiting Room Guidelines

Our waiting room has comfortable chairs and sofas where families can relax and take a break. **For safety reasons, do not leave children unattended in the waiting room.**

TV Use

There is a TV in the waiting room. Feel free to watch your favorite show. Please be considerate and remember that the TV is for everyone’s use:

- Keep the volume at a moderate level.
- Make sure that what you are watching is appropriate for all viewers.

Internet Access

Most areas of the NICU have wireless access if you want to use your laptop computer or tablet.

Computers, Printers, and Business Services

If you need to print something from your email or the internet, please visit the Health Information Resource Center. The resource center has computers, a printer, and other business services. It is in the 3rd floor lobby, next to the Gift Shop, and is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk with your NICU doctor or nurse if you have questions or concerns.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:
206.598.4606

Thank you for working with us to create a safe, healing, and positive environment in the NICU!