Our NICU Code of Conduct
For Neonatal Intensive Care Unit parents and visitors

This handout explains our code of conduct in the NICU.

Your baby’s care and safety are our top priority.

We know that the NICU experience can be a very stressful time in the lives of our families. This NICU code of conduct was created to provide clarity and consistency for our families. 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 your baby’s care and safety, some areas in your baby’s room must be kept clear. Please keep all of your family’s personal belongings in the family storage cupboard.
Parents as Caregivers

- Parents may stay with their infant 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Parents participate in their baby’s care, guided by the nurse, as much or as little as they choose. Please talk with your baby’s nurse to learn how you can be involved in your baby’s care.

Safety

- Doctors and nurses must be able to get to your baby easily. Always make sure the entry into your baby’s room and the area around your baby’s bed are completely clear of all personal belongings (see “Baby Care Area” in the photo on page 1).
- Families are welcome to decorate their baby’s room and door. All decorations:
  - Must be able to be cleaned with alcohol wipes
  - Cannot be a fire hazard
  - Must be secured using only tape, and only to a non-painted surface
- Parents and visitors 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 your baby only when you are sitting in a chair that does NOT have wheels.
- It’s easy to become drowsy holding your baby. We will wake you or move your baby back to their incubator or bassinet if you start to fall asleep while holding your baby.
- Never turn off alarms in your baby’s room. Alarms tell us when your baby might need help.
- Most medical equipment is meant to be used by trained medical professionals. Please ask your nurse before using any equipment in your baby’s room.
- Do not wear perfume, aftershave, or other scented products when you plan to visit the hospital.

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.
- Wash your hands when you enter the NICU, each time you enter or leave your baby’s room, and each time before you touch your baby.
• Remove any jewelry from your wrists or hands, and do not put it back on until you have left the NICU.

• Keep your baby’s room clean.

• Always clean up after yourself.

• Use room refrigerators as instructed. Room refrigerators are used to hold infant formula and milk. They are carefully monitored to make sure they stay at the right temperature. NICU parents may keep an unopened juice, soda, or yogurt in the refrigerator door. Once these items are opened, do not put them back in the refrigerator.

We Care for Your Infant 24 Hours a Day

We care for your baby all during the day and all night, too. Nurses must interact with your baby around the clock to help your baby make progress. This means that nurses often need to turn on lights in the middle of the night. If you plan to sleep in your baby’s room:

• There is a pull curtain if you would like to sleep.

• Before you go to sleep, talk with your baby’s nurse about your baby’s care plan for the night.

• Remember that anyone who is feeding your baby must sit in a chair that does not have wheels. During the night, your nurse may need to use the sleeper chair you are sleeping in for feedings. When it is time to feed your baby, be prepared to get up so that either you or your nurse can sit in the sleeper chair to feed your baby.

Courtesy and Respect for Others

• If you have a concern during your stay in the NICU and cannot talk with your nurse, ask to speak 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, and/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.

• If you want to take a picture or video that may include a nurse, doctor, or other hospital staff, ask their permission first.

• Never take a photo or video of another family or baby in the NICU.

• Do not use drugs or drink alcohol in the NICU.

• Do not engage in sexual activity in the NICU.
Cell Phones

Please be aware that cell phones have many germs on them. This means that cell phones can expose your baby to illness. Also, ringtones and conversations on cell phones may disturb your baby. Please mute all personal electronics or listen with headphones while visiting your baby.

To protect your baby and others in the NICU:

- Use an alcohol wipe to wipe down your cell phone when you enter your baby’s room. You can find wipes next to the sink in the room.
- After you sanitize your hands and are visiting with your baby, do not use your cell phone.
- Use Wi-Fi or airplane mode whenever you can. You can easily log on to free Wi-Fi while you are in the hospital.
- Try to limit your cell phone use while you are in the NICU.
- If you must use your cell phone, make sure that you are at least 3 feet (an arm’s length) away from all medical equipment.
- If you do touch your cell phone while you are visiting your baby, please re-wash or gel your hands.
- You may text, read emails, use personal tablets or laptops, and search the internet in your baby’s room. Always remember to wash your hands or use gel after touching or using electronic devices.

About the NICU Family Lounge

- The family lounge was a generous gift from a grateful NICU family. It is a place for families to take a break from the stress of being in their infant’s room.
- The family lounge is only for parents and siblings of NICU babies. Other family members and friends should use other facilities in the hospital.
- There is no maid service in the family lounge. Please always clean up after yourself promptly.
- As many as 40 NICU families may want to use the family lounge at any time. Please be considerate of others while you are using the lounge, so that all NICU families can benefit from a much-needed break.

Bathroom

When using the bathroom, please:

- Limit your bathroom time to no longer than 20 to 30 minutes.
- Place used towels and washcloths in the laundry hamper.
- Clean your toiletries and bring them back to your baby’s room.
Dishes

- Rinse all dishes and place them in the dishwasher, or wash dishes with soap and water, dry them with a towel, and put them away.
- If the dishwasher is full, please run it.
- If the dishwasher needs to be emptied and dishes put away, please help out.

Food Storage

- If you put food in the refrigerator, label it with your name and the date. Use the refrigerator to store only a day or two of food.
- Eat only your own food.
- The refrigerator will be cleaned every 2 weeks. We will post signs with cleaning dates. Any food left in the refrigerator on cleaning day will be thrown away.

Washer and Dryer

- Remove your clothing from these machines as soon as the wash or dry cycle is done.
- Clothing left in the washer and dryer may be removed and left out in the room.

Computer Use

- Limit your use of the shared computer to 30 minutes or less at a time.

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 family storage cupboard. Make sure to keep the entry area and the Baby Care Area clear (see photo on page 1).

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

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