

A Safe Place for Your Baby

NICU Code of Conduct for all families and visitors

This document explains the NICU Code of Conduct, designed to keep your baby safe and ensure the best care. It includes guidelines for safety, courtesy, and infection prevention. Families and visitors must follow these rules to create a safe and welcoming environment.



Scan with your phone camera for a digital copy of this handout.

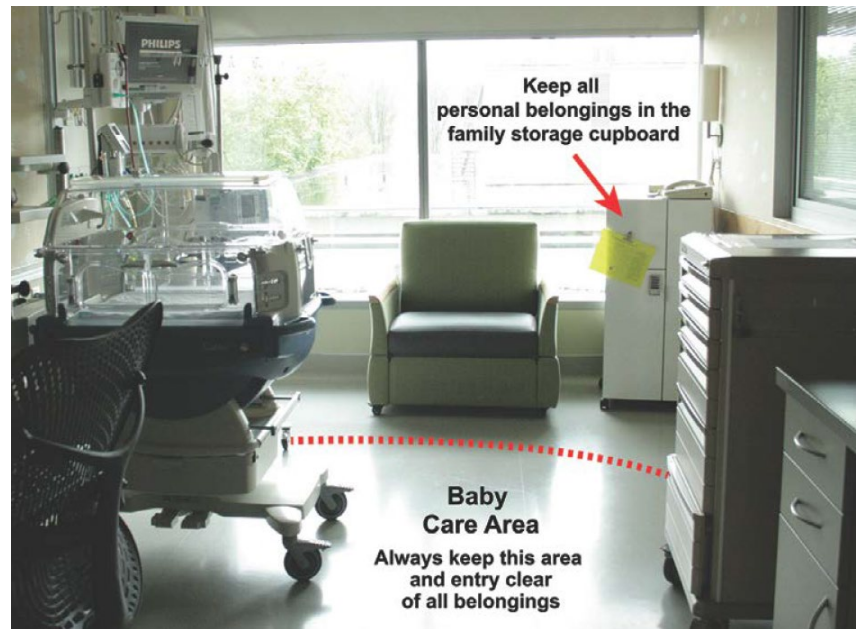
Our Top Priority Is Your Baby's Care and Safety

We know that having a baby 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 to create a safe and positive environment, keep babies safe, and help them receive the best care possible.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Safety

- **Doctors and nurses must always be able to easily get to your baby and the medical equipment.** Make sure the entry to your baby's room and the area around your baby's bed are completely clear of all personal belongings.
- You may need 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** if sitting in a chair that does **NOT** have wheels or with wheels that are locked.
- It is easy to become drowsy while holding your baby. We will wake you or move the baby back to their bed if you start to fall asleep while holding the baby.



For safety, some areas in your baby's room must be kept clear.

- **Never turn off alarms in your baby's room.** Alarms tell us when the baby might need help.
- Medical equipment is meant to be used by a trained medical professional. Please ask the nurse before using any equipment in the baby's room.
- Do **not** wear perfume, aftershave, or other scented products when you visit the NICU as they can irritate your baby's lungs.
- For safety and infection control, you must have shoes on your feet when walking in the NICU.

Preventing Infection

All the babies in the NICU are at risk for infections.

To keep them safe, no one who is sick may visit. If you have been sick, you must be free of symptoms for at least 24 hours.

When you arrive, you will be asked if you are free of infection. If your baby's brothers and sisters visit and are under 12 years old, you will need to complete a Sibling Screening and take their temperature daily.

Washing your hands is the best way to keep your baby safe from infection!

When entering the NICU, you must wash for 30 seconds.

- Take off watches and jewelry and keep them off during your visit.
- Roll up your sleeves and wash up to your elbows.
- Clean under your nails.

Use hand sanitizers before and after you enter your baby's room and before and after touching your baby or after a diaper change.

Cell Phones

Phones and other electronic devices have many germs on them.

- Use an alcohol wipe to clean your device(s) when you enter your baby's room.
- Do not use cell phones while holding your baby.
- Please wash or use gel on your hands after you touch your phone and before touching your baby.

Keeping your baby's room clean

- Always keep countertops, tables, and sinks free of family items. Keep all personal belongings in the family storage cupboard.
- You are responsible for your own belongings at all times.



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

- Do not leave belongings unattended in the NICU.
- 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 family storage cupboard 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 windowsill clear.
- Room refrigerators are used to hold infant formula and milk. They are carefully monitored to make sure they stay at the right temperature. Please do not place any food or drinks in this refrigerator. If you have something that needs to be refrigerated, please label it and place it in the refrigerator in the parent lounge. You are also welcome to bring a small cooler from home.
- As soon as you are done eating, please:
 - Clear the area of any food.
 - Take your personal dishes to the Family Lounge and clean them.
 - If you have a hospital tray delivered to the room, ask to have it removed.

Room Decorations

Families are welcome to decorate the inside of their baby's room and door. All decorations must meet the Department of Health and Fire Safety regulations. 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
- No live plants, flowers, or balloons are allowed

Please check with your baby's nurse if you want to put something in the bed. The nurse needs to ensure it will not interfere with the safety and care of your baby.

Decorating your baby's space can be an important part of NICU life. If you have any questions about how to safely personalize your space, please ask NICU staff.

Courtesy for Others

- If you have a concern during your time in the NICU, please talk directly with your baby's nurse. If you cannot talk with your baby's nurse, ask to speak with the Charge Nurse or the Nurse Manager.

- 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, smoking, vaping, alcohol, or weapons in the NICU.
- If you smoke before you visit the NICU, consider changing into clean clothes before entering the unit. The smoke on your clothes can irritate your baby's lungs.
- Do not engage in sexual activity in the NICU.
- Please respect the privacy of care providers and others in the NICU:
 - Ask permission if you would like to take a picture or 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.

Staying Overnight in Your Baby's Room

- Parents/banded designated persons may stay overnight in their baby's room. For security reasons, the NICU is locked at night. You need to be in the baby's room before the unit is locked as no one is allowed to enter during this time. Check with your nurse for the hours the unit is closed.
- We provide sheets, pillows, and blankets.
- We have very limited areas for sleeping in the room, so no more than 2 people are allowed to sleep in the room. Young siblings are not allowed to spend the night. Anyone spending the night must be at least 16 years old.
- Please keep the sleeping area tidy.
- Remain fully clothed while in your baby's room. Wear shoes when you get up.
- Be aware that nurses often need to turn on the lights in the middle of the night to care for your baby. They may need to have you get up from the sleeping chair so they can safely feed your baby.

Talk with your baby's nurse about the plan of care for the night:

- Discuss if you would like to sleep or participate in care.
- Pull the curtain closed if you would like to sleep.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:
206.598.4606