

# The NICU Environment

In the NICU, your baby may be surrounded by several machines, tubes, and wires. Here are some explanations to help familiarize you with the NICU environment:

- **Monitors** – various probes on the baby’s chest record heart rate, breathing, and temperature. A blood pressure cuff is sometimes placed on the baby’s arm or leg to measure blood pressure.
- **Pulse oximeter** – small probe wrapped around your baby’s toe, foot, hand, or finger to monitor the amount of oxygen in your baby’s blood.
- **IV pump** – administers medications, fluids, or feedings at a set speed over a specific period of time.
- **Isolette** – also known as an incubator, an isolette is a clear plastic enclosed bassinet used to keep infants warm. Premature infants often lose heat quickly, so the temperature of the isolette can be adjusted to keep the baby warm regardless of his/her size or room temperature.
- **Gastric (feeding) tube** – light, flexible tube placed through the infant’s mouth (orogastric, OG) or nose (nasogastric, NG). The tube passes down the esophagus and into the stomach. It is used to give food or remove air from the stomach.
- **Nasal cannula** – light, flexible tube used to give oxygen to an infant; oxygen flows through two prongs that sit in the nostrils.
- **CPAP** – (continuous positive airway pressure) oxygen delivered through a small mask or prongs that sit in the nostrils to help keep the lungs inflated. Nasal CPAP is commonly used to prevent the need for an endotracheal tube and ventilator, or after the endotracheal tube is removed.
- **Endotracheal tube** – small tube placed through the mouth into the infant’s trachea (windpipe). The tube is connected to a ventilator and helps the infant breathe.