



# BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

Department of Pediatric Newborn Medicine

## Newborn Intensive Care Unit



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
TEACHING HOSPITAL



## Welcome to the Brigham and Women's Hospital Newborn Intensive Care Unit

We are honored that you have chosen to entrust your baby's care with us.

Parents want the best for their baby, both before and after birth, and at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), our goal is to provide the very best for every baby. Giving birth to a baby with health complications often is totally unexpected. Parents can be faced with difficult decisions that must be made quickly and determining the best course of action can be quite stressful.

Unanticipated conditions and risk factors can affect the pregnancy course and sometimes alter what is needed at delivery. Our internationally-recognized neonatologists and their expert nursing and other Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) colleagues are dedicated to providing the best and most advanced care possible to newborns with critical and unique health challenges. Our state-of-the-art NICU:

- is the largest in Massachusetts, providing expert newborn care for nearly 3,000 premature and seriously ill babies and their families each year;
- provides care for babies in all of the highest risk categories: those who are mildly or extremely premature, have one or more major structural abnormalities, serious inherited disorders, or life-threatening birth asphyxia (lack of oxygen around the time of birth);
- welcomes babies born at BWH and others that come by helicopter or ambulance transfer for the most advanced NICU care that can be provided.

The experience of having a baby that requires special medical care is a time of uncertainty and stress for the baby's family. Even when you are in the best place with the best doctors, nurses, and other staff, we understand that a stay in the NICU can be a very challenging time and we want to help you, as well as your baby, cope with the situation.

We hope that this information will reassure you that, along with you, your baby is getting the best care possible. This is just the beginning of the information you will receive. Your baby's team will be reaching out to you to keep you informed. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to ask questions of your baby's doctors and nurses at any time.

## Your Baby's Care in the NICU

Your newborn will receive individualized, specialty care from a dedicated NICU team that will help your baby grow and thrive while he or she is in the hospital. This comprehensive team will guide you through your newborn's stay in the NICU, communicating and educating you about your baby's progress, teaching you about our efforts to overcome medical challenges, and providing resources to educate and support you through this challenging time.

The primary members of your baby's health care team include:

- **Neonatologist** – The neonatologist is in charge of your baby's medical team and is a pediatrician who is a certified specialist in caring for premature and sick babies. An attending neonatologist will oversee all of your baby's care in the NICU and will examine your baby each day.
- **Neonatology Fellow** – A neonatology fellow is a pediatrician who is completing additional training to become a neonatologist.
- **Pediatric Resident** – A pediatric resident is a pediatrician who is receiving training in our hospital. Several residents will care for your baby under the direction of the attending neonatologist.
- **Registered Nurse** – A registered nurse (RN) who specializes in the care of newborns will be assigned to care for your baby. Each NICU baby has his or her primary team of NICU RNs, though your baby and family will meet and work with additional members of our nursing team.

Other important members of your baby's health care team will include nurse practitioners, physicians assistants, dietitians, respiratory therapists, developmental specialists (such as physical, occupational, and speech/feeding therapists), pharmacists, social workers, NICU family support representatives, and other pediatric specialists – all dedicated to meeting the needs of baby and parents.

Parents are the most important members of their baby's care team. We welcome parents in the NICU 24 hours-a-day every day of the year. With our assistance, parents are educated in techniques for caring for babies in the NICU and are encouraged to touch, hold, feed, and care for their babies as much as possible. Our expert NICU staff will help parents identify the best ways they can help their baby recover, grow, and develop. We also provide assistance to parents in caring for their babies while they are in the NICU in some specific and incredibly important areas, such as:

- **Breastfeeding Support** – Breast milk provides essential nutrients and other factors that protect against infection and offers other important benefits to your baby's growth and development. Most babies in the NICU are not ready

to drink by mouth right after birth. Our lactation specialists and NICU nurses instruct new mothers on pumping their breast milk and storing it for feeding by tube until their baby is ready to breastfeed. Once a baby is able to transition to the breast, our lactation specialists and NICU nurses also assist mothers and babies with positioning and latching onto the breast.

- **Skin-to-Skin Contact** – This is a practice in which the infant is placed on the mother's or father's chest. Our NICU staff assists parents in accomplishing this, even when babies are very small or sick, and this practice promotes bonding between babies and parents, enhances breast milk production, and often helps to relieve the feeling of separation experienced by some parents. Babies who have skin-to-skin contact generally have better breastfeeding success. They may also be calmer, have better blood sugar levels, improved respiratory rates and healthier body temperatures than babies who do not receive skin-to-skin contact.
- **NICU Reading Program** – Hearing his or her parents' voices helps a baby's brain develop. Reading is a great way to offer this brain stimulation. Our program introduces parents to reading favorite childhood books in the NICU to provide this brain stimulation in a way that can be best received by their very small or sick infants.



### Information about Your Baby's Condition

The NICU team will keep you informed about your baby's care, and you may call or visit the NICU at any time. If you have questions or concerns about your baby's care, please ask us. Your baby's doctors, nurse or social worker can arrange a family meeting with members of the baby's health care team to discuss your baby's diagnosis and treatment plan.

When your baby is ready to be discharged, the attending neonatologist will provide your baby's pediatrician with detailed medical information about your baby's NICU stay and coordinate with your pediatrician as needed for ongoing care.



## Supportive, Compassionate Care for Families

Supporting families is an important part of the care we provide. We offer a number of programs to help families cope during and after their babies' stay in the NICU.

- **Family Support Program** – Our Family Support Program is staffed by former NICU mothers. Working closely with the medical team, and the March of Dimes Organization, our Family Support specialists help parents manage the emotional and logistical challenges they may experience while their baby is in the NICU. They also bring many NICU parents together in parent- and family-oriented activities that celebrate and honor NICU parenthood. Even while you are in the NICU, it is important that you stay connected to each other as well as to other parents who are experiencing the same NICU journey that you are on.

- **Social Services** – In addition to providing support and counseling, social workers can assist families with tasks such as health insurance registration, finding a pediatrician, or locating community resources, such as Fragile Beginnings, Early Intervention, March of Dimes, Parents of Premies, etc.
- **Care Coordination** – Care coordinators are nurses who assist social workers in providing families with the information and support they need throughout their stay. They also can assist families in preparing for the transition home or to a specialty care nursery closer to home.

### Parking

We encourage parents to visit as often as possible. In order to support parents who need to frequently visit the NICU, we offer a discounted parking rate beginning at 2 pm on weekdays and anytime on weekends.

## Leading the Way and Transforming Newborn Care



Brigham and Women's Hospital has been named to the *U.S. News & World Report*® Honor Roll of America's Best Hospitals for the past 23 years, ranking sixth nationally in 2015-2016. We are working to transform newborn care in ways that are more effective and compassionate.

The Department of Pediatric Newborn Medicine is led by Terrie Inder, MD, MBChB, the Mary Ellen Avery Professor of Pediatrics in the Field of Newborn Medicine at Harvard Medical School and a dual-boarded neonatologist and child neurologist. Dr. Inder is a practicing neonatologist who has conducted extensive research on brain development among preterm and high-risk infants.

Dr. Inder leads a team of neonatologists, pediatricians, pediatric hospitalists, nurses and other allied health professionals who provide highly-skilled care to preterm and critically ill babies. Our physicians are faculty members of Harvard Medical School who will work closely with pediatric specialists at Boston Children's Hospital or Mass General Hospital for Children, as needed.



**BRIGHAM AND  
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