

When Your Baby Stays in the Hospital

What to expect

This chapter explains what to expect if you are discharged from hospital care and your baby is still a patient, either on the Mother Baby Unit or in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

What happens if my baby stays in the hospital after I am discharged?

Sometimes a mother is discharged from the hospital but her baby still needs hospital care. If this happens for you, and:

- **Your baby is strong enough to stay in the Mother Baby Unit (MBU):** You can stay in your MBU room and help care for your baby.
- **Your baby needs extra care:** Your baby will stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). You will become a “guest” at the hospital and can stay overnight in your baby’s NICU room.



It is best for parents and newborns to stay together, if possible.

What can I expect when my baby is a patient and I am a guest?

- You will sign **discharge forms** for yourself. This means that you are no longer a patient in the hospital and will not receive medical care. Your baby will keep receiving medical care as long as they are a patient.
- We will remove your **inpatient wrist band**. But, you and your support person will keep wearing the wrist band that matches your baby’s band. You and your support person need to keep these bands on until you take your baby home.

- You will need to provide your own **food**. Before you sign out, you might want to order some snacks from room service. This will give you a little time before you need to think about bringing in food, ordering take-out, or using the cafeteria. You can keep these snacks in the refrigerator in your room until you are discharged. We will refill your water and can give you access to a microwave to heat your food.
- You and your support person will need to provide your **clothing and supplies**. We will give you 6 peri pads, 2 mesh panties, a bar of soap, and toothpaste to last until you can get your own supplies.
- You will need to take care of your own **medicines**. Please remember to pick them up from the pharmacy before you need your next dose. The Mother Baby Unit cannot supply medicines to you after your discharge.

What if I (or my support person) need medical care?

- If your support person needs urgent medical care, they should go to the Emergency Department.
- Because you were recently discharged, if you need urgent medical care, you may be able to see a doctor or a midwife on the Labor & Delivery Unit. If you need to see a doctor, tell your baby's nurse. We will help you get care either in the Labor & Delivery Unit or the Emergency Department.

How can we help care for our baby?

On the Mother Baby Unit:

- **At least 1 parent must stay with your baby 24 hours a day.** Some parents choose to take turns.
- **Tell your nurse right away if you need to leave your baby's MBU room for any reason.**
 - If you will only be gone 15 to 20 minutes, we will arrange for a nurse from the MBU to watch your baby.
 - If you need to be gone longer or more often, your baby will need to stay in the NICU. If this happens, you can visit your baby there. You can sleep overnight in your baby's NICU room as a guest.



Tell your baby's nurse if you want some quiet time for yourself and your baby.

- **If you want some quiet time for yourself and your baby,** please tell your baby's nurse. We will circle "Do Not Disturb" on the sign on the door to your room and note an end time on the clock sign. Talk with your baby's nurse about how to "cluster" care around feeding times.

On the MBU or in the NICU:

- **Please talk with your nurse about what you can do to help care for your infant.** We want to help you learn as much as possible before you take your baby home. We also want to help you practice care while your baby is in the hospital.
- **While your baby is in our care, we will:**
 - Talk with you about your baby's plan of care
 - Watch and assess your baby's health
 - Support, supervise, teach, and help you as needed so that you can feed and care for your newborn by yourself
 - Provide the highest quality medical care for your baby
 - Provide your baby's diapers, blankets, clothing, and feeding supplies, and your breast-pumping supplies as needed

Safety

- Read the chapter "Newborn 'Safe 8'" in your workbook.
- Please keep the floor clear, so that care providers can easily and quickly get to your baby from the door.
- Keep all personal belongings inside the storage cupboard. Please tell us if you have any problems doing this.

Preventing Infection

Infants are at risk for infections. To help prevent infection please:

- Wash your hands or use the hand gel sanitizer:
 - Each time you enter your baby's room
 - Each time you leave your baby's room
- Please tell us if you are getting a cold or the flu.
- If visitors or family members are ill, ask them to stay at home and visit when they are well.

Personal Belongings

- You are responsible for your own belongings at all times.
- Please do **not** leave any of your belongings in the room when you leave the room, even if you will be gone for just a short time. Take electronic devices and all connectors with you.
- Before discharge, be sure to check everywhere for items you may have brought with you. Check the floor, electrical plugs, your bedding, the sofa-bed area, bathroom, and shower. Make sure you do not leave any of your belongings in the hospital when you go home.

Coping

This can be a stressful time for parents. Many parents are tired and some are worried. Most are eager to take their baby home.

Your baby's discharge date depends on:

- Their vital signs
- Their progress with feeding
- Whether they have jaundice

Your baby's doctors and nurses will be talking with you every day about your baby's discharge plan. But please know that the discharge plan may change often and suddenly. We will help you to be ready when it's time to take your baby home.

Please talk with your nurse about how you are feeling and what you need. Your nurse can help you through this time.

Privacy

Please remember that care providers may enter your baby's room at any time. This means you do not have the privacy you have at home.

Please:

- Use the bathroom for changing clothes.
- Remind your partner to wear clothes while they are in your baby's room.

Your Baby's Stay on the Mother Baby Unit

Your baby's nurse will work with you to cluster care. Each shift, your new nurse will make a plan with you for feeding, taking vital signs, weighing your baby, doing tests, and anything else that needs to be done for your baby's care. Please call the nurse if your baby wakes up to feed earlier than planned so we can support your need to rest.

Goals for My Baby's Stay on the Mother Baby Unit

My Baby's Plan of Care

Feeding

Weight

Vital Signs

Discharge Goals

Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk with your baby's doctor or nurse if you have questions or concerns.

Now, please go back to the Table of Contents in this workbook and check the box so your nurses will know you have read this chapter.