

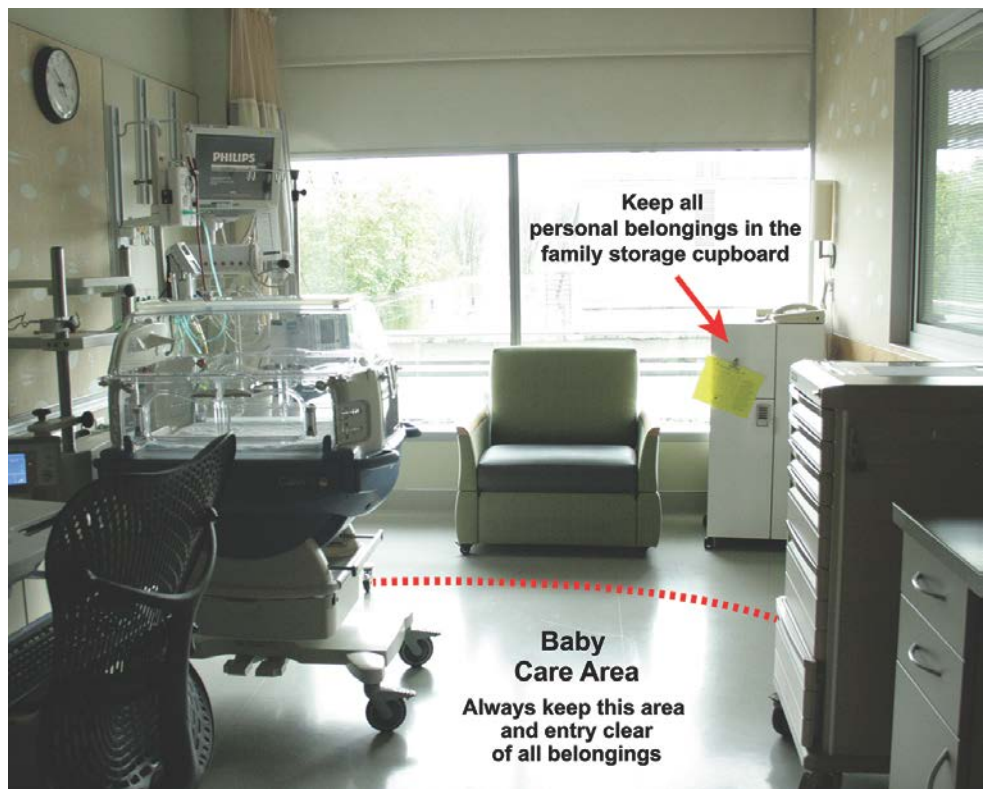
A Safe Place for Your Baby

About our NICU code of conduct

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

We know that having a baby in the NICU can be a very stressful time in your family's life. Our 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 our 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.



"I wish someone had told me that even with all of the hard days and sadness, there is truly something wonderful and magical about the NICU. It can be a really wonderful place."

– Lucy's Mom

Parents as Partners in Your Baby's Care

- We want you to feel welcome and safe here. Parents may stay with their infant 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- You and your baby are the center of our care team. Our guiding principal is that parents do not "visit" their baby, but are here providing care and parenting.
- We will work with you to manage your baby's daily plan so that you can be present to provide important care and parenting. You can take part in essential activities such as holding, feeding, diapering, and bathing, as much or as little as you choose.

Safety

- **Doctors and nurses must be able to get to your baby easily during all hours of the day and night.** 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 photo on page 1).
- To give your baby the best care:
 - We will turn on the lights when they are needed.
 - Care tasks will be done as needed, even in the middle of the night.
- Rarely, a nurse or doctor will ask parents and visitors to step outside the room. This is done when treatment is needed or if there is a medical emergency. **This may happen at any time day or night.**
- Hold your baby **only** if sitting in a chair that does **NOT** have wheels.
- It's easy to become drowsy while 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.
- The door to your room can have only your baby's name on it.
- Inside your room, if there is a window, you may decorate it with flat, laminated items: photos, drawings, and written sentiments. Please keep everything else at home.
- For safety and infection control, all family members and visitors must have shoes on their feet when walking in the NICU.

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.

Sick family members and friends must stay home until they have been free of symptoms for at least 24 hours. If you have questions, please talk with the Charge Nurse.

Daily Health Screening

Even minor cold symptoms can be a serious health risk to premature infants. To keep your baby and others safe, we screen everyone for health concerns before they enter the NICU. You and your guests will answer a short health survey every day that you visit the NICU.

We may ask you more questions about your health if we know that colds, flu, and other illnesses are active in the hospital and community.

Hand Washing

Everyone who visits the NICU must wash their hands and arms up to the elbows before they enter the unit. Scrub sinks are at the front and rear entrances of the NICU. Since you will need to remove any jewelry from your wrists and hands, it is best to leave valuables at home.

Please:

- Remove any jewelry from your wrists and hands. Do not put the jewelry back on until you leave the NICU.
- If you have long sleeves, roll them up above your elbows.
- Wash your hands and arms to your elbows with soap and water for at least 30 seconds.
- Then, when you enter your baby's room, wash or gel your hands again before you touch your baby.
- After touching your baby, wash or gel again.
- If you do not see staff, providers, or others wash or gel our hands before touching your baby, please feel free to remind us.

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.
- Our environmental services staff must be able to clean and disinfect your baby's room every day. To allow them to do this important work, please:
 - Fold your linens when you get up and leave them on the day bed.



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

- Put all of your personal belongings in the small family storage cupboard by 10 a.m. 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 family cupboard. Keep food items to a minimum.
- Keep the floor and window sill 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 drinks or food items in the refrigerator. If you have something that needs to be refrigerated, please label it and place in the refrigerator in the parent lounge.

Room Decorations

Families are welcome to decorate your baby's room and door. All decorations must meet 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

We understand that decorating your baby's space can be a very important part of NICU life. But, your baby's safety is our first priority. If you have any questions about how to personalize your space safely, please ask NICU staff.

Staying Overnight in Your Baby's Room

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. If you stay overnight in your baby's room, be aware that nurses often need to turn on lights in the middle of the night.

For your comfort, we offer sheets, pillows, and other linens. We ask that you please keep your child's room tidy, folding and storing bed linens when you are not using them.

If you plan to stay overnight in your baby's room:

- Please be aware that space in your baby's room is limited. Only 1 parent can sleep comfortably overnight in the baby's room. Siblings may **not** spend the night (see "Siblings" on page 5).
- Pull the curtain closed if you would like to sleep.
- Please remain fully clothed while in your baby's room and wear shoes when you get up.

- Before you go to sleep, talk with your baby's nurse about your baby's care plan for the night:
 - Options for skin-to-skin (kangaroo care) time
 - When mom would like to pump and/or feed baby
 - How you can participate in your baby's care
 - Plans for parent sleep time
- 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.

Visitors in the NICU

Parents Who Spend the Night

Our unit is closed from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. If you are a parent who is spending the night, please make sure you arrive before 1 a.m. If you leave the unit during time that the unit is closed, you will not be able to re-enter until after 5 a.m.

Siblings

- **An adult must supervise children at all times while they are in the hospital.**
- Your baby's brothers and sisters may visit at the bedside:
 - If they are well
 - When a parent is in the room
 - During the day (we cannot accommodate overnight stays for siblings)
- You will need to fill out a special health-screening questionnaire for siblings under the age of 13. Screening includes a temperature check.
- Remember that toddlers and preschoolers have short attention spans, so please keep their visits short.
- If your NICU baby is part of a multiple birth, their same-age sibling may visit, but must arrive and leave the NICU in a car seat or stroller.
- Please ask a staff member if you have any questions about bringing your children to visit their sibling.



An adult must supervise children at all times when they are in the hospital.

Family and Friends

- Your family and friends, age 13 and older, are welcome to visit your baby when you are in the room.

- Because of limited space, we ask that no more than 3 or 4 visitors (including you) be in your baby's room at a time.
- During nursing change of shift, guests will need to wait in the visitor area outside the NICU.
- Please tell your family and friends that we cannot provide patient information to anyone other than you. You will decide what information you wish to share with your family and friends about your baby's condition and keep them up to date.
- If you have information you do not want us to talk about when family or friends are present, please tell your baby's nurse or doctor so that we can take extra privacy measures.
- In special circumstances, you may choose a close family member or friend to spend time with your baby when you cannot be in the NICU. We will need to get your written consent for this to happen. Please talk with your baby's nurse about this.

Meals

As soon as you are done eating a meal in your room or in the Family Lounge, please:

- If you have a hospital tray, ask for it to be removed right away.
- If you eat a meal that you brought with you, take your dishes to the Family Lounge and clean them right away.
- Use a wet paper towel to wipe up any crumbs around your eating area.

Courtesy for Others

- If you have a concern during your stay in the NICU, please talk directly with your nurse. If you cannot talk with your nurse, ask to talk 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.
- Do not use drugs or drink alcohol in the NICU.
- Do not engage in sexual activity in the NICU.

Respecting Others' Privacy

Please respect the privacy of care providers and other families in the NICU:

- Ask for their permission if you would like to take a picture or a video that may contain a nurse, doctor, or other staff member.

- Never take a photo or video of another family, baby, or another baby's name card.

Cell Phones

- You may use your cell phone in the NICU, but leave the ringer in silent or vibration mode. A ringing cell phone could disturb your baby or the other babies nearby.
- When talking on the phone, speak quietly to help keep noise low.
- If you need to talk on the phone during nursing hand-off, please leave the room.
- Also, if you will be talking on your cell phone for a long time, please consider having your conversation outside your baby's room.
- Please consider limiting your cell phone use while you are in the NICU. If you must make or receive a call:
 - It is best go to a private area away from your baby and other patients.
 - Make sure that you are at least 3 feet (an arm's length) away from all medical equipment.
- You may text, read emails, use personal tablets or laptops, and search the internet in your baby's room. It may help you to stay close to your baby while also taking your mind away from the stress of the NICU for short periods of time.
- Do not use cell phones and personal electronics while you are holding your baby.
- Use Wi-Fi or airplane mode whenever you can. You can easily log on to free Wi-Fi while you are in the hospital.

Infection Control

Please be aware that **cell phones and other electronic devices have many germs on them**. This means that they can expose your baby to illness. 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.
- If you do touch your cell phone while you are visiting your baby, please re-wash or gel your hands.
- If you use personal tablets or laptops in your baby's room, always remember to wash your hands or use gel after touching or using them.



The Family Lounge has a kitchen and other amenities to help make your time in the NICU more comfortable.

About the NICU Family Lounge

- The Family Lounge is a place for families to take a break from 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.
- Environmental Services staff will clean the Family Lounge daily, but they will not do dishes. Please help keep the area neat and tidy, and wash your dishes as soon as you can after using them.

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

- When you are done with your dishes, either:
 - Rinse your dishes and place them in the dishwasher;
 - Or, wash your 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 small amounts 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.

- Please do **not** bring anything sharp into the NICU.
- Do not leave any belongings unattended in the NICU.
- Keep all personal belongings inside the family storage cupboard. It is very important to keep the entry area and the Baby Care Area clear (see photo on page 1).

Family Lounge and Waiting Room Guidelines

Our large family and waiting rooms have comfortable chairs and sofas where families can relax and take a break. **For safety reasons, do not leave children unattended in the Family Lounge or in the waiting room.**

TV Use

There are TVs in both the Family Lounge and the waiting room. Feel free to watch your favorite show.

Please be considerate and remember that the TV is for everyone's use:

- Keep the volume at a moderate level.
- Make sure that what you are watching is appropriate for all viewers.

Internet Access

- Most areas of the NICU have wireless access, if you want to use your laptop computer or tablet.
- The Family Lounge also has computers with internet access.

Computers, Printers, and Business Services

If you need to print something from your email or the internet, please visit the hospital's Health Information Resource Center. The center has computers, a printer, and other business services.

The Resource Center is in the 3rd floor lobby, next to the Gift Shop. It is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



The Health Information Resource Center is on the 3rd floor of the hospital, next to the Gift Shop.

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