

Neonatology

Non-birthing partners in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

Your presence on the NICU is one of the best things you can give your baby.

Ways to get involved in your baby's care:

- providing a second nurturing pair of hands when your baby is receiving a care procedure
- participating in care times such as helping with nappy changes or feeding
- engaging in skin-to-skin time. This is great for you and your baby for release of the bonding hormone oxytocin and giving warmth to your baby. This time is best to encourage deep sleep, which is when your baby's brain develops most

During skin to skin, your baby can:

- hear your voice
- smell you
- feel you

These are three of the senses that help your baby develop.

Building your confidence on the NICU

It might be helpful for you to share the following information with the therapy team:

- which roles and routines are important to you?
- what might make it more challenging for you to be present on the unit?
- what would help you to be more involved in your baby's care?



Managing stress

We are here to support you in your parenting journey. An important part of this is keeping you healthy so you can care for yourself and your baby in the right way.

Parents often say their stress levels go down a lot once they learn what their baby's cues mean.

Your baby's cues are their sounds and movements. It's their way of communicating with you. But you might not understand their cues at first.

So, you can set up a time to discuss this with the therapy team. This can be a great way to better understand your baby and their needs

The neonatal team wants to support you in understanding...

Your new role as a non-birthing partner

Talk to us about:

- supporting your partner
- supporting your baby
- managing work and home demands while visiting your baby on the NICU
- managing your stress and mental health

The NICU environment

Talk to us about:

- medical equipment
- types of neonatal units
- your baby's medical condition and status
- understanding the roles and responsibilities of each NICU practitioner

Building a community of partners

We encourage you to speak to other non-birthing partners in the NICU:

- to share and reflect on similar experiences
- to feel a sense of relief that you are not alone
- to give or receive advice from others in your position

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service, and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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