

Guide to Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



Welcoming the newest addition to your family can be an exciting. The Raffles Hospital (RH) NICU is designed to support and nurture not only your baby, but your family.

The following guide has been developed to provide and ensure a safe and beneficial environment for your baby, and to give you a headstart in your parenting journey.

About the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Your infant has been admitted to the RH NICU, a specialised unit to care for premature and special needs newborns and infants. Throughout your baby's stay, the medical team will explain to you the treatment provided for your baby. We encourage you to be involved in your baby's care wherever possible as this helps to establish and strengthen your bond. Please discuss your baby's plan of care with the nurse so that we can coordinate your visits to maximise your involvement.

What does the "Level I to III" mean?

Neonatal Care is categorized into three levels. Level I care are for well newborns, in which the emphasis is on parent craft, encouragement of breastfeeding; Level II provides care for babies who require essential monitoring to moderately-ill babies and Level III care is for the more ill baby.



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Frequently asked questions

How do I access the NICU to see my baby?

NICU is located at Level 8 of Raffles Hospital. The hospital's main entrance is at Level 1 where there are lifts available to take you to Level 8.

For security purposes, please bring your NRIC/ Passport for verification. If the mother is still admitted in the hospital, you may show your hospital ID band instead. To protect your baby from infection, only parents of the baby are allowed into the NICU. For family visitors, you may ask the Nurse to open the window blinds for them to see baby.

Why is my baby in a special bed?

Premature babies are usually nursed in an open radiant warmer or an isolette. These beds provide easy access and temperature control. As your baby becomes healthier and gain weight, the baby will be moved into an open crib. You may hear the word “weaning to a crib or bassinet”, because we slowly decrease the amount of heat in the isolette and dress your baby as we assess if they are ready to be moved into a crib or bassinet.

How often do I need to wash my hands?

Hand washing is the most important and effective way of preventing the spread of infection. Follow the hand washing poster instructions that is located in each washing sink in the NICU.

Alcohol hand gel is available at your baby's cot side to use after touching items such as breast pumps and before handling your baby.

Who can visit my baby?

Visitation is limited to parents from **11am-2pm** and **5pm-8pm** daily.

Premature and sick babies have very limited resistance to infection. As such, anyone who is unwell should not enter the NICU. If you are feeling unwell and having symptoms of a cough, cold, rash, tummy bug or fever, please call the NICU staff in advance to discuss whether visiting is advisable.

What are Ward rounds?

Hand-over shift reports start at 7am every morning while doctors' rounds vary. In order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of each baby, we will ask you to wait outside when the doctor's round start. You will be invited in to participate when the team discusses your baby.

You may also be asked to leave the room at other times e.g. during certain procedures, but will be able to return as soon as they are completed.

Will my baby have any vaccinations?

Hepatitis B and BCG vaccination are given soon after your baby's recovery, with your consent. Please refer to your Baby's Health Booklet for the details of the RH Vaccination program.

Developmental Care

We promote a soothing environment by keeping the lights dim, speaking quietly and keeping babies swaddled when appropriate. Our team strives to individualise the care provided for your baby. Please switch off your mobile phone while in the NICU. We encourage minimal handling of your baby to reduce stress, protect sleep rhythms, as well as to promote growth and physiological stability.

Kangaroo Care

Our team provide kangaroo care when your infant is ready. Kangaroo care is skin to skin contact between a parent and a low birth weight infant. It has been shown to improve the behavioral & physiologic state of the newborn, reduce oxygen needs, improve respiratory patterns, improve thermal regulation, enhance cognitive and motor development.

Breastfeeding

We strongly recommend breastfeeding for all babies. If you decide to breastfeed, you should start expressing breast milk soon after birth and do this frequently to establish your milk supply. Your expressed breast milk (EBM) will be fed to your baby while your baby is unwell and /or premature, with the aim being to take your baby home fully breastfed. Nurses and lactation consultants are available to assist you with initiating lactation and expressing breast-milk.

Parent-craft

We want to help you and your partner to be prepared when your baby is ready for discharge. This allows you to visit your baby more often to learn parent craft. Our NICU team is equipped with extensive knowledge in caring for babies and would be able to support your parenting journey.

Discharge and follow up care for your baby

Length of stay

Premature babies are usually ready to return home two to three weeks before their due date although this will vary from baby to baby. Some premature babies may stay beyond their due date. There are weight criteria that babies must meet before discharge. In addition, your baby must be feeding well, gaining weight and you must be confident in providing the care your baby requires.

For babies born with problems at term, the length of stay in hospital depends on your baby's health problems.

Follow up Care

Infant CPR will be taught to parents upon discharge of your baby. You will be advised for the follow-up care with our Neonatologist/Pediatrician on the day of your baby's discharge from NICU.

Other Services

You may approach our staff if you require assistance in the following:

Financial Counseling

For financial assistance or information on your baby's hospital bill.

Interpreter

Interpreter service is available for families where speaking and/or understanding English is a concern. Please approach the nurses if an interpreter is required.

Our NICU team aims to support you in the care of your baby during their stay in the NICU by providing education about infant development and expected milestones.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to approach any of our staff or call us at **6311 1567**.