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## Family News



*The NICU Family News is produced by the Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC) Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Family Advisory Council (FAC). It is designed to provide you with information we hope you will find useful during and after your family's stay in the NICU.*

### DID YOU KNOW...

... August is National Breast Feeding month so keep pumping and breastfeeding. Contact the lactation consultants with any questions or concerns (973-322-5684).

■ ■ Saint Barnabas Medical Center  
■ ■ Barnabas Health

The SBMC NICU is now on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU](http://www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU) 

94 Old Short Hills Road, Livingston, NJ 07039  
1-888-724-7123 [barnabashealth.org/sbmc](http://barnabashealth.org/sbmc)

### All About Vaccines and the NICU

**Q: What are vaccines (also called immunizations) and what do they protect against?**

A: Vaccines are usually shots, given to protect your baby/child from serious diseases including hepatitis, measles, mumps, whooping cough, tetanus, chicken pox and more. They are given in infancy, through childhood, and into adulthood.

**Q: What vaccines will my baby get while in the NICU?**

A: The answer depends on how long they will be in the NICU but ALL babies should get a "birth dose" of the Hepatitis B (Hep B) vaccine while in the NICU. The actual age the baby will get the "birth dose" will depend on how they are doing medically but should be given to all babies before leaving the hospital; preferably as close to birth as possible.

Babies in the NICU for 8 weeks or longer will usually be given all their two month vaccinations at that time as long as they are medically stable. If they are not stable, vaccines will be held off a few days or weeks based on the baby's condition.

**Q: My baby seems so small and young, why is it so important to give the first shot for Hep B so early?**

A: The earlier in life you give this vaccine the better protected your baby will be from getting the Hepatitis B virus which can have very serious consequences later in life including liver cancer and cirrhosis. The series of 3 (sometimes 4) shots of this vaccine give long-term, possibly lifelong protection from Hepatitis B.

**Q: Are vaccines safe?**

A: Yes, every vaccine is tested for its safety long before it can be used on children and they continue to be closely monitored for as long as the vaccine is used.

**Q: What about side effects?**

A: Each vaccine is a little different but the side effects are usually very minor, such as low grade fever or soreness where the shot was given. Such side effects usually don't last very long and can be treated with pain relievers such as Tylenol. Serious reactions are very rare but if you have questions or concerns, ask your baby's doctors and nurses.

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## Interview With a Seasoned NICU Nurse: Maureen Griswold, RN SBMC NICU Staff Nurse

### Q: How long have you been working in the NICU here?

A: Well, when I first started to work in the Newborn Nursery at SBMC in 1974, there was no NICU. There was a room right next to the nursery called the "preemie room". All the healthy preemies stayed there until they met the criteria for discharge. At that time the very sick babies were transferred to Newark Beth Israel or United Hospital of Newark. Then a few years later, Dr. Santo Domingo came along and that was the beginning of SBMC having a NICU.



Maureen Griswold, RN

### Q: How did you know you wanted to be a NICU nurse?

A: For as long as I can remember all I ever wanted to do was take care of babies. How lucky am I that, I got to do what I always wanted to, for all my life, taking care of God's littlest angels?

### Q: What do you like most about working in the NICU?

A: I think what I really like most is teaching the parents to care for their babies I also enjoy watching the babies regain their strength and wellness and progress and finally go home because that is our main objective.

### Q: Have you seen any beneficial changes in the NICU since you have worked here?

A: The advancement in the technology of caring for these babies has been amazing. When I first started working a 23-24 "weeker" did not have much of a chance. But today most of them survive and eventually go home with their families doing quite well.

### Q: What does Family Centered Care in the NICU mean to you?

A: Family Centered Care in the NICU is beneficial to the staff and the parents for the well being of the baby. Family Centered Care means team work to me; everyone working together for the good of the baby.

### Q: What suggestions or advice do you have for NICU families?

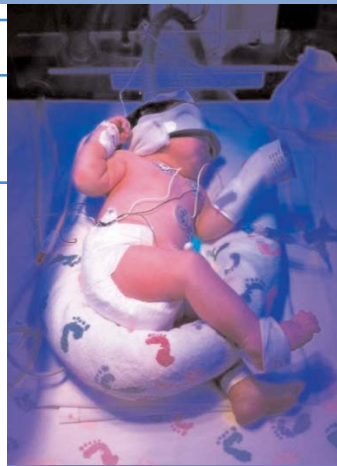
A: I always suggest to parents that they participate in their babies care as much as possible. The more you care for your baby the more familiar and relaxed you will be with the baby, which in the end will prepare you for when you take your baby home.

### Q: Anything else you would like to say about your job?

A: It's a very satisfying and rewarding job and I am proud to be a part of the team. The doctors, nurses and all the ancillary staff are very caring and dedicated people, going all out for the common good of caring for your littlest angels.

## Logan's Story

Logan was born in July of 2011 and as any parent would be, we were overjoyed and immediately in love. Although everything appeared to be fine after her birth, the neonatologists were concerned about her skin yellowing (jaundice). As the yellowing worsened, blood work showed that Logan had hemolytic disease due to ABO Incompatibility. They quickly took Logan into the NICU a few hours after she was born and began treatment. Logan was in the NICU for almost a week, where she received phototherapy and other necessary treatments.



Logan in the NICU and now at nearly three years old.



The initial sight of the NICU and everything Logan was hooked up to, and surrounded by, frightened us beyond belief. We had so many questions and concerns. Luckily, we were almost immediately introduced to Logan's neonatologist, Dr. Santo Domingo. He conveyed such a sense of calm and warmth. He explained everything and answered all of our questions... daily.

We spent each day in the NICU, anticipating opportunities to hold her, feed her and change her; desperately seeking some sort of normalcy. The nurses were wonderful and offered us every possible appropriate opportunity, to engage with Logan. Each day, we would look around the unit and see all of the other babies, many preemies with medical problems far greater than Logan's; and were blown away by the level of skill and care that the NICU staff provided to each patient. We knew that despite the situation, she was in the very best hands, receiving excellent care.

We never imagined the possibility of our daughter needing the care of the NICU nor the fear and emotional rollercoaster that would come with that experience. While in the grand scheme of things, Logan's condition was mild and manageable - we feel truly blessed to have received the care from the NICU and the exceptional neonatologists at Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC). Regardless of the reason any baby goes into the NICU, it is a completely terrifying experience and because of the excellent medical care and access to medical advancements - we feel forever grateful to the staff at SBMC.

**-Robert & Meredith J.**

Save-The-Date  
14th Annual Miracle Walk  
To Benefit the SBMC NICU



**Sunday,**  
**October 5, 2014**  
Verona Park, Verona, NJ

To learn more or register:  
**MIRACLEWALK.COM** ■ **973-322-4259**

Find MIRACLE WALK on FACEBOOK  
**FACEBOOK.COM/MIRACLEWALK**

### Important Phone Numbers:

NICU  
973-322-5300

NICU Step-down (3100)  
973-322-5310

NICU Nurse Manager  
973-322-8938

NICU Social Workers  
973-322-5503 or 8408

NICU Case Managers  
973-322-2045  
973-322-2678

Birth Certificate Office  
973-322-5327

Lactation Consultants  
973-322-5684

NICU High Risk Infant  
Follow-Up Program  
973-322-2631

### Want to Help the Family Advisory Council?

The FAC is made up of graduate parents dedicated to helping new NICU parents. We meet monthly to discuss ways to do this. We're always looking for recent graduate parents to share their experiences and ideas to make our NICU the best it can be. We welcome your ideas and participation. Contacts:

Eileen Steffen  
NICU Quality & Research  
Coordinator  
esteffen@barnabashealth.org  
973-322-5453

Hayley Hirschmann  
FAC Coordinator  
hhirschmann@barnabashealth.org  
973-322-5453

## All About Vaccines and the NICU (continued)

### Q: Is my preemie given vaccines based on their actual age or their adjusted age?

A: In the NICU we try to give the babies their vaccines largely based on their actual age as long as they are medically stable enough for us to do so. Sometimes when a baby is very premature or very tiny at birth, adjustments need to be made to this scheduling, which will be discussed with you.

### Q: When I leave the hospital, how do I keep track of what immunizations the baby needs and when?

A: There are some excellent charts and personalized/interactive immunization schedules available on the internet. Google this topic or "Instant Childhood Immunization Schedule" to choose the one that is right for you. There are also free apps, like Vaccines On The Go, available on your smartphone that keep track and provide lots of information if you think that is best for you.

### Q: Do I need to get any vaccines?

A: It is recommended that parents/primary caretakers get the Tdap vaccine for Whooping cough (aka: Pertussis). Speak to your OBGYN and/or pediatrician about getting this. Sometimes parents can even get this vaccine here in the hospital. Ask your baby's nurse for more info about this if you are interested. ■

## Enjoying Summer With Your Baby

It's wonderful to be able to enjoy the great outdoors in the summer with your baby once you are home. Here are some tips from other parents for having a safe summer with your baby:

- Don't overdress your baby. Dress him in what you'd be comfortable in, you don't want him to get overheated. If you're worried about him getting cool, carry a blanket with you.
- It is usually not recommended you use sunscreen on your baby until about 6 months of age, so check with your pediatrician before that first sunny day outside.
- You may want to buy a shade for the stroller to protect baby from the sun. The shades that come on the strollers don't usually offer enough coverage. A wide-brimmed hat can also help keep the sun off baby's head and face.
- Most pediatricians suggest you do NOT use insect repellent until your baby is 6 months old but check with them to be sure.
- You can buy a bug net for over the stroller and pack and play. You may also want to consider an inexpensive pedestal rotating fan for some air on the hot humid days and let it blow near (but not directly on) baby's seat/stroller. This can help keep baby cool and keep the bugs away at the same time!
- Make sure baby's room is cool enough at night but don't let the air conditioner or fan blow directly on the baby.
- Mom and baby need to be drinking enough fluids to stay hydrated.
- If you are carrying breast milk or formula in a cooler, don't forget to put an ice pack in with it so it doesn't spoil.
- If your baby is on medications read labels carefully and be sure to keep him out of direct sunlight if that's what the labels say.
- During the height of the summer, try to avoid being outside with your baby between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the sun/temperature is hottest.