

Noise in the NICU



Premature infants less than 32 weeks gestation are especially sensitive to loud noises because their hearing structures are immature and still developing. The staff will partner with you, the parents, to make your baby's environment as quiet and stress-free as possible.

Too much noise can cause:

- Changes in vital signs, including heart rate, respiratory rate and blood pressure
- Agitation and irritability
- Fatigue and sleep disorders, which can interrupt gaining weight, healing and immunity (protection from disease)
- Increased risk for hearing loss, abnormal sensory and brain development, speech and language problems

What can the care team do to reduce the noise your baby is exposed to?

The staff can:

- Silence alarms as soon as possible, and handle equipment quietly
- Cover the giraffe incubator
- Empty water from oxygen tubing
- Avoid writing while leaning on the giraffe
- Educate and remind staff from all areas of the hospital who enter the room, to speak and work quietly

Together, the staff and parents can:

- Speak in low tones at the bedside, and educate other visitors to do so as well
- Gently remind those speaking loudly to speak quietly
- Conduct discussions quietly away from the baby, preferably out of the room
- Close porthole doors, drawers, hampers and garbage lids quietly
- Work with your baby through the portholes as much as possible
- Silence mobile phones before entering the room
- Speak quietly if video-calling (and ask those on the video-call with you to do the same). Consider using headphones/ear buds.
- Avoid placing anything on top of the giraffe incubator