

WELCOME TO THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

NICU PARENTS:

- Congratulations on the birth of your baby!
- You are welcome in the NICU at any time. Sometimes when there are special procedures being done or new babies being admitted you may be asked to wait briefly in the family areas (NICU Family Lounge & Sibling Play Area or Family Library).
- You are encouraged to spend as much time with your baby as possible and touch and provide care for them, as much as their medical condition allows.
- Kangaroo Care (skin-to-skin care) is a special way for parents to hold their baby. When you come to spend time with your baby, you can hold your baby skin-to-skin against your bare chest. Talk to your baby's nurse for more information.
- In order to ensure the safety of your baby, we ask that only the parents of NICU babies be present during the nursing shift changes, which occur daily from 6:30-7:30 am and pm.
- To protect the privacy of all our infants and families, we ask that you and your visitors spend time only at *your* baby's bedside unless invited otherwise by another baby's family.
- Your ID band is how security and NICU staff will identify you as the parent of your child when you come to the NICU. Once you are discharged from the hospital please see a NICU staff person to have your photograph taken and placed with your ID band in a pouch that can be worn around your neck while in the NICU.

NICU VISITORS:

- For the most part, only two people may be at the bedside at a time, with one needing to be the baby's parent. A third person may also visit at the bedside if there is room, and for limited periods of time, so as not to get in the way of the staff caring for the babies.
- If interested, parents can choose up to 4 people ("Designated Support People") to visit their baby/babies without them. Ask at the welcome / security desk outside the NICU for the paperwork to arrange this.
- Visitors must be at least 18 years of age.
- We ask that visitors not at the bedside wait in the NICU Lobby, Family Lounge or Family Library. This ensures that the hallways and patient areas are clear in case of an emergency.
- You and your visitors should never enter the NICU if you have any signs of illness (i.e. diarrhea, flu/cold symptoms, cough, fever, etc).

HAND WASHING:

- Everyone coming into the NICU for the **first** time each day, or returning to the NICU from outside the hospital, must wash their hands up to their elbows for 2 minutes with the soap provided at the sinks. Please roll up your sleeves and remove all jewelry and watches to do this most effectively.

- Before washing your hands please place your phone and other electronic devices in a new plastic bag (available at the main handwashing sinks or the welcome desk) upon arriving each day. If you leave the hospital and return later in the same day, please get a new bag.
- Sign the log at the NICU security desk for a day locker and secure any coats and personal belongings BEFORE washing your hands.
- Also remember to use the waterless hand gel before and after touching your baby and the areas around your baby's bedside. Please be sure to wash with soap and water whenever you can see your hands are dirty.
- **When siblings visit, parents should help their child wash their hands first, and then wash themselves.**

NICU SIBLINGS:

- We suggest that siblings visiting the NICU be at least 3 years of age. If a sibling is less than 3 years of age, your NICU infant will stay in their isolette or crib during the visit.
- Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children at all times. If the bedside nurse feels the sibling's behavior is disruptive to a healthy and healing environment, the nurse or charge nurse will ask the parent to remove the sibling from the NICU.
- The sibling must pass a health screening with your nurse before each visit.
- Siblings are considered to be a brother or sister of the infant. This also includes children with a sibling relationship (i.e. stepsiblings or foster siblings).
- Siblings may visit at any time, except during shift changes (6:30-7:30 am and pm).
- Only one sibling may visit the baby at a time with a maximum of 3 people at the bedside and will be limited to 15 minutes once per shift.
- Siblings may visit in strollers as space allows.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

- Please **DO NOT USE** your cell phone to make or take calls at baby's bedside. Your cell phone may be used in the NICU to text, e-mail or take pictures but **ALWAYS** gel or wash your hands after touching your phone or electronic device before touching your baby. **Please DO NOT hold/use your cell phone, for any reason, while holding your baby.**
- When making or taking video calls please speak quietly and/or consider using headphones.

CALLING THE NICU:

- You may call the **NICU 24 hours a day at 973-322-5300**. Please do not call during the 6:30-7:30 am/pm shift changes. Information about a baby will be given to parents only. You will be asked to give the 4-digit ID number on your band to identify yourself on the phone.
- Sometimes the nurse caring for your baby may be unable to answer your call at the moment you are calling. If you are asked to call back, please do not panic.
- If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask, **THE NICU STAFF**.