

NICUPS Newsletter | June 2017

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (2nd Floor)

A NICU is an intensive care unit for premature and/or sick newborns. Most babies we care for in our NICU are premature (born before 37 weeks gestation). Because they were born before all of their body systems were ready, they need help with breathing and learning how to eat. Other infants in our NICU are full term but may have complications such as infections, surgical needs or birth defects. Some babies in the NICU are critically ill; others need specialized care and observation while they grow and develop.

Our NICU staff has a special mission of treating and nurturing babies with these conditions. The team's specialized skills, combined with the most advanced medical knowledge and technology, provide each baby with the best care during what can be a stressful and critical time.

Our NICU is comprised of 98 beds separated into eight animal themed pods; four on the green side (where most babies are admitted) and four on the yellow side (where most babies are discharged). We are a Level III neonatal intensive care unit, which offers comprehensive care.

Length of Stay in the NICU

Each baby is unique. Babies who are born very early will probably go home closer to their due date, while babies born a few weeks early may be able to go home a couple of weeks or more before their due date. The medical team and nurses will talk with you about your baby's progress towards going home. Before a baby can be discharged, they must be able to hold their body temperature, take all feedings by bottle or breast and be able to go for a period of several days without apnea and bradycardia. If necessary, the medical team may discuss taking an apnea monitor home with your baby.

Recently Admitted?

Learn how to care for and provide comfort to your baby by attending the following classes:

Registration is required. **To register, visit mercy.net/NICUstl.**

Premie Development: Attendance is strongly suggested to anyone involved in the care of your baby. A NICU team member discusses information including reading and responding to your baby's cues and the developing sensory system.

Infant Massage: A certified infant massage instructor provides massage instruction that could enhance parent-infant bonding, improve your baby's sleep patterns, and relieve conditions such as congestion, gas and colic.

Car Seat Installation: A child passenger safety technician will verify that you have the appropriate car seat for your baby, teach you how to properly position your baby in the car seat and how to install the seat in your vehicle.

We regret that space allows us to only offer the following classes to parents and guardians. We are not able to offer the class to non-custodial grandparents or caregivers.

CPR Classes: An infant CPR class is offered free of charge. Additional family members can attend Family & Friends CPR offered by Mercy Hospital. For class dates, times and fees, call 314-961-2229 or register online at mercy.net/stlclasses.

NICU Discharge Class: An experienced NICU RN discusses information including maintaining nutritional and fluid intake to promote growth and development, identifying conditions/symptoms that require immediate medical attention, and creating and promoting a safe home environment.

Important Phone Numbers:

Yellow NICU Desk:
314.251.6286

Green NICU Desk:
314.251.6450

Sibling Room Reservations:
314.251.6180



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Parent Support

Mercy Kids
Every child. Every need. Every day.

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Family Support Program

Many parents feel sad over the loss of their idealized images of childbirth. Others feel guilty that they could not carry their baby to term or even angry at their situation. Others wonder about preparing for the financial responsibilities of having a premature or sick baby. The NICU can seem very overwhelming and parents often feel stressed and helpless. These are all common feelings. Parents need to know that they, too, can make it through the NICU experience and there are resources to assist them.

The Family Support Program includes resources to help families navigate the NICU.

Resources include:

- Social workers/care coordinators who can assist with financial questions and planning for post discharge needs.
- Chaplains who can help with spiritual needs.
- Therapists who identify developmental needs and offer help in meeting those needs during the baby's hospitalization and transition to home.
- A family advocate and a support group called the NICUPS™. The NICUPS volunteers are parents who once had a baby in the NICU. They can provide non-medical information and support through individual visits or phone calls, group meetings, and online resources. Contact can be made by calling the NICU Family Advocate at 314.251.6222 or email at kristin.love@mercy.net. The NICUP group contact information is 314.251.6636.

Breakfast: Every Tuesday of the month at 9:00 a.m. in the NICU Parent Lounge

Family Activity: First and Third Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. in the NICU Education Room

Dinner and Discussion: Second and Fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the NICU Education Room

- Parent Support People: Parents may name up to four individuals, age 18 or older, who are allowed to visit the baby in the NICU without a parent present.
- NICU Cuddlers are trained volunteers who may hold and comfort our NICU babies, assess their stress signals and offer supportive care for families. Cuddlers do not feed babies, change diapers, kiss the babies or perform any medical procedures.



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