

# **Parents' Guide to the Neonatal Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital**

**Contact Numbers: (028) 375 62305 or (028) 375 62307**

**Available 24 hours a day**

## **Our Commitment To You: Neonatal Care Standards**

- All babies will be assessed by nursing and medical staff within 1 hour of admission
- All equipment used will be explained to parents
- Parents will be able to contact the Neonatal Unit by telephone, at any time, day or night to receive an update on their baby
- All babies will be seen daily by senior medical staff
- Parents will receive information about any treatment or investigations which may be required and the results will be explained to them when available
- Mothers who wish to breastfeed their baby will receive support & encouragement
- Parents will be supported in all aspects of caring for their baby in preparation for discharge
- We will work in partnership with parents when planning for discharge
- Your community midwife/Health Visitor will be informed of your baby's discharge on the day of discharge and will receive written documentation via the parents at the first visit following discharge

## General information: Safety & Security

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital and congratulations on the birth of your new baby

The unit is staffed 24/7 by a team of medical and nursing staff. There are 5 rooms or nurseries and a 'Named Nurse' is responsible for the care of the babies in each room. Your baby may be moved between nurseries as his/her condition changes.

You are welcome to contact the unit at any time to enquire about your baby. Telephone numbers are on the front cover of this booklet. Please remind relatives and friends that they should not ring the unit as we are only able to give information to parents.

### Access to Neonatal Unit

The outer doors as you first enter neonatal unit are locked at all times. When you arrive, press the buzzer on the right hand side and face the camera. Staff will release the door to enable you to enter. When you are leaving the unit, press the button on the left hand side before outer doors to enable you to exit.

Never invite other family members or friends into the neonatal unit.

2 to a cot side is advisable due to space constraints

To ensure your baby is kept safe, we kindly ask that you do not walk about with your baby in your arms and that they are placed in their cot if you need to move from one place to another. We encourage you to cuddle and hold your baby but ask that you check with nursing staff before lifting them out so they can ensure monitor leads or intravenous lines are secure before your baby is moved.

Whilst you are in neonatal unit, please stay at your baby's cot side and respect the privacy of other babies by not straying over to their cot/incubator.

Never remove your baby from the unit unless staff are aware and the reason has been agreed.

Parents are vital in caring for their baby and are welcome in the unit at any time. Occasionally we may ask you to leave the room your baby is in for a short time if there is a medical emergency or if an X-ray is being taken.

Mobile phones are allowed but to ensure noise levels are kept to a minimum, please keep them on silent mode and calls should be taken outside the nurseries.

Please do not take photos/videos of other babies when you are in neonatal unit.

As the temperature within the unit is quite high, we advise you to wear loose, comfortable clothing.

# Because I have a brother or sister, I will always have a friend



Brothers and sisters are welcome to come to Neonatal to become acquainted with their new brother or sister

## There are a few things you can do to help us

- Brothers and sisters must **ALWAYS** be accompanied by at least one parent
- Let us know ahead of time when you are planning to visit
- It is critical you tell us about any sibling signs or symptoms of illness or exposure to contact with others with illness, for example high temperatures, colds, sore throats, flu, diarrhoea, hand foot or mouth or chicken pox as this will mean siblings **CANNOT** visit.. This list is not exhaustive so if you have any concerns, please talk to staff for advice
- We may also restrict visiting if there are any concerns about infection in the unit or concerns about spikes or outbreaks of infection in the community
- The length of a visit may need to be limited to a time period developmentally appropriate for the sibling age. For example up to the age of 10 years, a visit typically should last up to 30 minutes as young children can get tired and restless and unfortunately they are confined to the room your baby is in and are therefore unable to move freely around the unit . It may be better to leave a sibling visit close to the discharge date when your baby is stronger

## When can siblings visit?

**A weekly visit any day (if possible children should not visit during daily ward rounds 9am-11am). This is protected time for our ward round team to discuss the care plan and to involve you in making important clinical decisions about your baby.**

- You can bring a book for your child to read to their brother or sister
- Do not bring food or drink into the unit

## Preparing for a visit

- Show your child a picture of your baby before they visit
- Talk to your child about the environment and what to expect when they come
- Plan activities they can do like read a story or sing a song.
- They may want to bring paper and colouring pencils and draw a picture for their brother or sister



**Grandparents are not only concerned about the well-being of their grandchild, but also the well-being of their own child. The NICU is an emotional experience as the baby's condition may change daily, sometimes hourly, and the unexpected can happen**

**As situations change quickly in NICU so may plans, especially when it comes to visitors. The neonatal world is unpredictable.**

**We do advice parents to try and limit the number of visitors their new baby comes in close contact with until their baby's immune system is stronger and their baby's over all condition is stable**

**Family dynamics differ and we ask that you have a discussion with grandparents about visiting and what suits family life best.**

**You may not want grandparents at the cot side when the team are doing a ward round and you may not want them to be included when making medical decisions about your baby. Please let nursing staff know what information you would like shared with grandparents if they are visiting without you. Once your baby is clinically stable agree prior to a visit, whether or not they would like you grandparents to hold or cuddle your baby.**

**There may be times when baby needs to rest, for example after tests, procedures and examinations. This could also include after feeding.**

**Nurses are here to guide you and this may change from day to day depending on what changes have taken place in your baby's care plan**

**Priority for cuddles and having close contact and skin to skin which is so important to support the development of a close and loving relationship with your new baby will always be given to you as parents.**

**If it is not suitable for grandparents to have a cuddle, there are many other supportive things they can do, for example**

**They can bring a book to and from the unit and read to their grandchild during their visit. They can also sing to and share family stories with your baby**

## **Fire Safety**

A Fire safety drill may be planned during your visit. If the fire alarm should sound, please remain calm and follow the instructions of nursing staff who will direct you where to go.

## **Car Parking**

Car parking passes are available for parents who have a baby in the neonatal unit. Please ask any staff member for a pass when you are leaving the unit. You will get a new pass each time.

## **Meals and Accommodation**

We have a parents room available to stay overnight in preparation for home or for parents who wish to stay close to their baby during periods of acute illness. You can also use this room during the day

Parents also have access to a communal room with a fridge to store food. There is also a microwave, kettle and toaster and bread, tea and coffee is available. The canteen is a short walk from the unit and you are welcome to purchase food there also. At the front entrance to the hospital, there is a shop and coffee bar.

There is also a drinks refreshment station within the unit, where you can access a cold drink of juice or water. This can be taken to the cot side but we would advise that you keep and consume any hot drinks in the Parent tea room area only

## Hand Hygiene & Infection Control in the Neonatal Unit

We will never reduce the risk of infection to zero. However, there are steps we can take to minimize risks. If families are willing to follow them, it should be reasonably safe for babies and grandparents to meet each other.



- Do not come to visit for example, if you or family members are feeling unwell or have been in contact with other relatives who have covid 19 symptoms, coughs, colds & flu like symptoms, gastro enteritis or chicken pox/ shingles.
- If in doubt always, ask staff for advice about the safe time for visiting



Our main concern is the health of both your baby and other babies in the unit

- To help protect **EVERYONE**, all visitors must carry out hand hygiene entering and leaving the unit and before and after handling your baby. Nursing staff will have already explained this too you when your baby was admitted

We can pick up micro-organisms from everything and everybody we come into contact with. They can also be passed on to anything or anyone. Some of these micro-organisms live on the skin and in the nose and are harmless but others are capable of causing infections particularly for vulnerable new-born babies. Good hand hygiene removes these micro-organisms from our hands before they can be passed on.

On admission to the neonatal unit, all babies will have a swab taken from their skin and nose to check for micro-organisms. These swabs will be repeated once a week until your baby goes home. It can take 3 days before the swab results are available and staff will update you on the result. The swab is quick and easy to take and should cause your baby minimal discomfort.

Some micro-organisms are more infectious than others. If the laboratory inform staff that your baby has an organism which may be of concern, your baby may have to be isolated in a room of their own for a period of time. Medical and nursing staff will keep you informed about the reason for this and the duration of isolation as advised by the hospital microbiologist and infection control team.

When you arrive to the neonatal unit:

- Remove your coat and hang on hooks provided
- Take off all your wrist jewellery
- We strongly recommend you do not wear artificial nails or nail varnish
- Remove any rings other than your wedding ring
- Roll your sleeves up to your elbows
- Clean your hands as shown below Please supervise your child when using alcohol gel
- Children , like adults should remove outdoor coats and roll sleeves up to the elbows when doing hand hygiene
- Nursing staff will instruct you on the use of tap water in neonatal for hand washing and always remember to use alcohol gel if you do wash your hands with soap and water
- Always supervise children when they are using hand gel

## **Clean Hands, safe Hands**

### **If your hands are visibly clean:**

Clean your hands using alcohol hand rub only for 20-30 seconds

### **If your hands are dirty or soiled:**

Wash your hands with soap and water for 40-60 seconds then dry your hands thoroughly using disposable paper hand towels.

**You MUST apply alcohol hand rub after for 20-30 seconds**

It is also important to look after your skin and keep your hands moisturised. Broken areas should be covered with a waterproof dressing.

### **WHEN:**

- 1: Before touching your baby** – When you arrive at the unit and when you leave the nursery
- 2: Before a clean procedure** – e.g. before feeding your baby
- 3: After handling bodily fluids** – after changing your baby's nappy
- 4: After touching your baby** – after feeding, after nappy change, after cuddles
- 5: After touching your baby's surroundings** – any area around your baby's cot or incubator and on leaving the neonatal unit

### **HOW:**

Follow the 7 steps below:



## **Use of Sterile Water for Baby Care**

Only sterile water is used for skincare in the neonatal unit. This includes nappy area care and bathing. Sterile water will be provided and any water used for nappy care or bathing should **NOT** be discarded in the hand washing sinks in the nurseries. Staff will advise on this.

## Equipment

The neonatal unit can be a noisy and busy place with lots of equipment and alarms which can be frightening for parents.

The type and amount of equipment used for your baby will depend on their condition. Alarms are indicators for nursing staff and do not always mean that your baby has a problem. An alarm can be triggered by something as simple as your baby moving.

The nurse looking after your baby will explain the different equipment that is being used.

**PLEASE never silence or turn off an alarm.**

Mobile phones are permitted in the unit but we ask you restrict the use of your phone to the outer corridor or parents rooms. Your phone should be kept on silent mode in the nursery. You may take photos of your baby but please respect the privacy of other babies, families and staff by not photographing them too.

## Multiple Births

You may have more than 1 new born baby in the neonatal unit. We will do our best to place your babies in the same nursery but sometimes they may be in different nurseries. If you are moving between nurseries, please remember to clean your hands before and after touching each baby.

Your babies may also be discharged home at different times depending on how they progress.

For extra support when your babies are discharged home there is a specialist Health Visiting service within the Southern Trust for families with multiples, please ask nursing staff for details.

## Transfers

Babies can be admitted to the unit directly from delivery suite or post-natal wards, or they can be transferred from another hospital.

Babies who are transferred from another hospital for care in Craigavon Neonatal Unit, will be transferred back to their original hospital for ongoing care once their condition is stable. If your baby is receiving 'special care' in this unit, your baby may be moved from here to the Special Care Baby Unit in Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry. We appreciate the potential inconvenience, but your help with transfers to Daisy Hill Special Care baby Unit means that, working together across the Southern Trust, we can provide the most appropriate support for ill babies as well as those who are getting better. Your baby will be transferred in a special transport incubator accompanied by a neonatal nurse. Your baby's medical and nursing care will remain unchanged.

## Parent and Family Involvement in Your baby's Care

We value parents as the primary caregivers for their baby and we will encourage and support you to be involved in your baby's care. During your baby's time in neonatal care, you will have the opportunity to learn new skills as you become involved in a range of care activities for your baby. You can also speak to members of the multidisciplinary team who are specialised in neonatal care and you will learn a lot about your baby's development.

You will learn how to communicate with your baby and respond to their cues. We will support you to comfort your baby through comfort holding and kangaroo/skin to skin cuddles. We will encourage you to change your baby's nappy, bath your baby, clean their eyes and mouth, breast or bottle feed your baby. You may also learn skills such as tube feeding your baby.

Each baby is given a story book on admission and we encourage all family members to read to their baby to provide comfort and support their development.

Staff will also facilitate art work including foot and hand prints as keepsakes.

We have a range of written information and QR codes to access on supporting your baby's development in neonatal care.

Our staff have designed a "New Baby in the Neonatal Unit" colouring book for young siblings at home. Please ask staff for one to take home with you. We can display their coloured in picture at your baby's cot side. This may help them understand why their brother or sister is in hospital and why you are spending time away from home.

## Ward Rounds

Ward rounds take place every weekday morning from 09:00 am and will be led by the consultant in charge for that week. As parents, you are the people who know your baby best and we encourage parents to be present during ward rounds as we work with you to agree the best possible plan of care for your baby. Your feedback on your baby's progress is valued and you help the team in making decisions for your baby's care.

It may be a good idea to write down any questions you would like to ask and journals are available for you to write down key information.

If at any time you wish to make an appointment to speak to the consultant regarding your baby, this can be arranged through the nurse in charge.

## Baby Clothes

When your baby is admitted to Neonatal they will not be wearing clothes if they are nursed in an incubator or are under phototherapy lights for treatment of jaundice. Once your baby is stable, they can then be dressed when they move into a cot. Quite often your baby may need more than 1 change of clothes in a 24 hour period.

Some parents find it a relief if the Neonatal Unit are able to provide a wide range of premature and new-born clothes for your baby during their stay in the unit. These clothes will be sent to the hospital laundry daily for a high temperature wash. This means parents or other family members do not have to worry about purchasing, washing, drying and ensuring your baby always has a supply of clean clothes. As a result you can spend more precious time in the neonatal unit with your baby.

When your baby is ready to move into a cot and ready to wear clothes, you may want to be present and bring in the first outfit for this transition from an incubator to a cot which is a very special occasion.

**Restrict what you bring in to a maximum of 3 Babygro's & vests** per day as storage of baby clothes at the cot side is limited. Cotton baby clothes are ideal as they are cooler for your infant to wear in the neonatal unit and they can be washed at high temperatures

If your baby is still in neonatal when they are several months old and they have outgrown our range of baby clothes, nursing staff may ask you to bring in some clothes for your baby from home.

If you bring in your own clothes from home, there may be a risk that staff may accidentally place a soiled item in the hospital laundry, but we will endeavour to avoid this happening. We would strongly advise, therefore, that you do not bring in sentimental items of clothing for example an item gifted to your baby from a close family member.

### **Bringing in your own clothes**

We would ask that you adhere to the following advice to control and prevent the risk of infection.

- Nursing staff will provide you with plastic bags for transporting your baby's clothes to and from the unit.
- Put your baby's soiled clothes in a plastic bag, tie a knot in the bag to secure the items in the bag and take home as soon as reasonably possible.
- Use a mild detergent and make sure clothes are rinsed thoroughly to remove all detergent residues, which may irritate a baby's skin
- Wash new-born clothes separately from the rest of the laundry to avoid any potential contamination from adult clothing
- Empty the soiled clothes into the washing machine.
- Discard the outer plastic bag at home because it will be contaminated from the soiled clothes.
- Wash all your infant's clothes separately from the household laundry.
- All clothes must be washed at a minimum of 60 degrees centigrade or the highest temperature the material will allow. (*Cotton* can be washed at high temperature whereas wool cannot).
- Please ensure all clothes are thoroughly dried either in tumble drier or air dry outside on a line/clothes horse.
- Store clean clothes in a dry, clean area to prevent contamination
- Place clean clothes in a clean plastic bag and bring back to the unit when you visit

- *Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling dirty clothing and before handling clean clothing.*

## Going Home

Throughout your stay in the Neonatal Unit, we will be preparing you for the day you take your baby home. Your baby will need to be feeding well, either from the breast or bottle, maintaining their temperature in a cot and gaining weight.

We encourage you to stay in our 'Parent and baby' overnight room. This will allow you to care for your baby overnight knowing that staff are close by should you have any questions or problems.

We will inform your GP, Community Midwife and Health Visitor that your baby is being discharged and they will be there to support you at this important stage.

When your baby goes home, you may be given appointments to return to the hospital at regular intervals and it is important for your baby's wellbeing that you keep these appointments. If you are attending an outpatient clinic, we would love to see you and hear how your baby is progressing.

## Parent Feedback

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust is committed to ensuring all our patients, relatives and carers have opportunities to tell us about their experience of receiving health and social care services in the trust.

One of the ways you can do this is through Care Opinion. Care Opinion is a website where you can leave your feedback and story relating to health and social care services. You can also see what feedback other people have left.

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/info/about>



Alternatively, please complete our regional neonatal discharge questionnaire which staff can give you. Place your completed questionnaire in the box on the corridor at the parents seating area.

## Staff you will meet during your stay in Neonatal

**Consultant Neonatologists & Paediatricians:** A senior medical doctor who will have overall responsibility for your baby's care during their stay in the Neonatal Unit. Consultants change every week so you will see different senior doctors each week.

**Ward Manager:** A senior nurse who has overall responsibility for the day to day running of the unit. If you have any concerns, please ask to speak to the ward manager or nurse in charge at any time. (Red Tunic)

**Nurse in charge:** A senior nurse will take charge of the ward in the absence of the ward manager (Royal blue tunic)

**Neonatal Nurses:** Nursing staff provide specialised care 24/7 and many have completed one or more accredited courses in neonatal care (Blue Tunic)

**Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners:** Nurses trained to Masters level in neonatal studies who work closely alongside the medical team (Scrubs)

**Health Care assistants:** Staff who support the nursing team and will help care for your baby in special care (White/light blue striped tunic)

**Dietician:** Provides specialist knowledge and advice on neonatal nutrition (White tunic, navy trim)

**Speech and Language Therapist:** Provides specialist infant feeding support to help babies and families have positive and safe oral feeding experiences and develop early communication and bonding (White tunic, navy trim)

**Occupational Therapist:** Provides specialist advice and support to parents and staff on baby's sensory and physical development in relation to their environment (White tunic, navy trim)

**Physiotherapist:** Involved in assessing and managing infants with respiratory, neurological or musculoskeletal conditions. Also provides advice & support on positioning infants to ensure optimal development (White tunic, navy trim)

**Infant Feeding Lead:** Provides support with breast feeding, expressing and safe bottle feeding (Maroon tunic)

**Pharmacist:** Provides specialist knowledge and advice on neonatal medications

**Domestic staff:** Responsible for keeping the unit clean (Green Tunic)

**Ward Clerks:** Responsible for administration work within the unit (Grey Tunics)

**TinyLife family Liaison Officer:** TinyLife Family Support Officers provide emotional and practical support to parents of all babies who have spent time on a neonatal unit (Purple Tunic)

**Portering Staff:** Supports ward staff in transporting people, equipment and supplies between different departments within the hospital (White Shirt)

**Chaplains:** Professionally trained clergy member who supports patients and staff with spiritual and religious needs

**ICAMHS:** Practitioners who offer specialist infant mental health support. Their role is to support parents to develop a relationship with their baby and promote the baby's mental health to enable them to develop secure emotional attachments to their parents/main care giver. If you would like to speak to a member of the ICAMHS team, please speak to the nurse looking after your baby.