



Your guide to the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



Children's

HSHS St. Vincent Hospital



We realize that this a highly *anxious and emotional time for you.*

We understand you may have had little, if any, warning that your baby would need to be admitted to HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital's Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Although no parent ever prepares to be in the environment of a NICU, rest assured that your baby is in a center equipped with the latest advancements in medical technology. Most importantly, our level III designated NICU has expert staff who are ready to work hand in hand to ensure your baby gets the best possible care for a healthy, happy future.

St. Vincent Children's Hospital's NICU was the first in Green Bay when it opened in 1969. Since then we have cared for more than 10,000 newborns, more than any other hospital in Northeast Wisconsin. Our unit is specially designed to give every baby the best chance to thrive in a soothing environment that is conducive to healing, growth and development. We carefully assess each infant's needs in order to tailor their care by taking into consideration noise, lighting and other factors.



What to expect

The first hours in the NICU are very busy for your baby. Nurses place your baby in an incubator or an open warmer and a neonatologist performs an immediate health assessment to identify his/her special needs. After the assessment, electrodes and sensors are placed and connected to our central monitoring system. This enables our caregivers to provide continuous monitoring of your little one's vital signs from both your baby's bedside and from the central nurses' station.

During your baby's stay in the NICU, his/her personalized care plan may include:

- **Periodic diagnostic testing:** Blood and urine tests, X-rays, and ultrasounds may be used to assess your baby's condition. A small tube may also be placed into an artery or vein so blood can be drawn from your baby without causing the discomfort of multiple needle pokes.
- **Special feeding support:** Depending on your baby's level of development and state of health, he/she may need a feeding tube that runs through the mouth or nose and into the stomach. Your baby may also require a high-calorie milk to help promote growth.
- **Medication:** Antibiotics and prescriptions that can stimulate breathing or regulate blood pressure or heart rate are examples of the types of medication your baby may need. A catheter or small tube may be placed in the blood vessels of your baby's umbilicus to administer the medication with ease.

- **Oxygen support:** Depending on your baby's specific condition, the following may be used to help your baby breathe or maintain good oxygen saturation:
 - **Nasal cannula:** Used to deliver constant air pressure into a baby's nose, which helps the air sacs in the lungs stay open.
 - **Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP):** Delivering more pressure than nasal cannula, CPAP is used in babies who are breathing well enough on their own that they do not need mechanical ventilation, but who need more support than nasal cannula offers.
 - **Mechanical ventilator:** A tube is placed in the baby's airway to deliver breaths directly into the lungs. With most ventilators the baby can still take his or her own breaths, but the ventilator will also breathe for the baby.

As often as you wish, our staff will be happy to tell you about the special equipment we are using or care plan we are following to help your baby. We realize parents have needs as well as our young patients, and we're here to help you too. Please, don't hesitate to ask questions. We know this can be a stressful time for your entire family and we want to do everything possible to provide the information you need to relieve some stress.

Your NICU care team

At St. Vincent Children's Hospital, we take a team approach when caring for your infant to ensure your baby gets the best possible start in life.

Parents – You are the most important member of our team! From the moment your baby arrives in the NICU, we encourage you to be here as much as possible to participate in his/her care. Your presence, loving touch and even your voice are vital needs only you can meet. As our partner in the recovery of your baby, we emphasize your right to ask questions at any time.

Some parents find the equipment in the NICU to be quite overwhelming at first, but don't let it keep you from interacting with your baby. Bonding with your baby in the NICU is as important as bonding with any newborn, sometimes even more so. St. Vincent Children's Hospital teaches and encourages skin-to-skin care, which has been shown to have a major, positive impact on survival and growth rates of NICU babies, as well as decrease the number of days spent in the hospital. Numerous studies have shown that skin-to-skin care has many health benefits for NICU babies including higher blood oxygen levels, improved sleep, improved breastfeeding and improved weight gain. Skin-to-skin contact, or kangaroo care as it is often called, involves placing a diaper-clad, infant in an upright position on a parent's bare chest – tummy to tummy – with the infant's head turned so that the ear is above the parent's heart. Check with your baby's care team to find out when you can begin kangaroo care.

Neonatologists (nee-o-nay-tahl-o-jist):

Our neonatologists are specialists who have received advanced, intensive training in the care of high-risk infants. While in the NICU, a neonatologist will act as your child's primary physician, coordinating and planning care with your baby's entire care team. A neonatologist will meet or call you daily to provide a report on your baby's progress. When your baby is ready for discharge, your neonatologist will transfer care to your pediatrician of choice.

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner: The neonatal nurse practitioner is a registered nurse who has advanced education and training in the development, care and treatment of babies and their families. The nurse practitioner works in collaboration with the neonatologist. They attend high risk deliveries, perform procedures, and participate in the ongoing management of your baby.



Nurses: The nurses in the NICU are specially trained to treat sick and premature infants and manage your baby's individualized plan of care. They collaborate with your baby's multidisciplinary team, and can provide you up-to-the-minute information on your baby's progress, as well as teach you to care for your baby.

Respiratory Therapist: Breathing problems are common for babies in the NICU. Preemies often require respiratory care because their lungs are not fully developed. In addition to providing respiratory care for preemies, respiratory therapists also care for infants with upper respiratory infections and other medical conditions. More specifically, respiratory therapists administer respiratory medications, assist the nurse with assessment and care and manage the respiratory equipment that helps your baby to breathe.

Developmental Care Specialist: Following your baby's development is very important as he/she grows. Our developmental care specialist will assess your baby's development and movement, tolerance to the environment, stress signs and self-calming strategies. The developmental care specialist will teach you about your baby's language or cues, and ways you can comfort and support your baby. The specialist may also provide individualized feeding plans to help your baby learn how to feed in ways that support lifelong skills. You will also receive information about resources to help your baby continue to grow and develop at home.

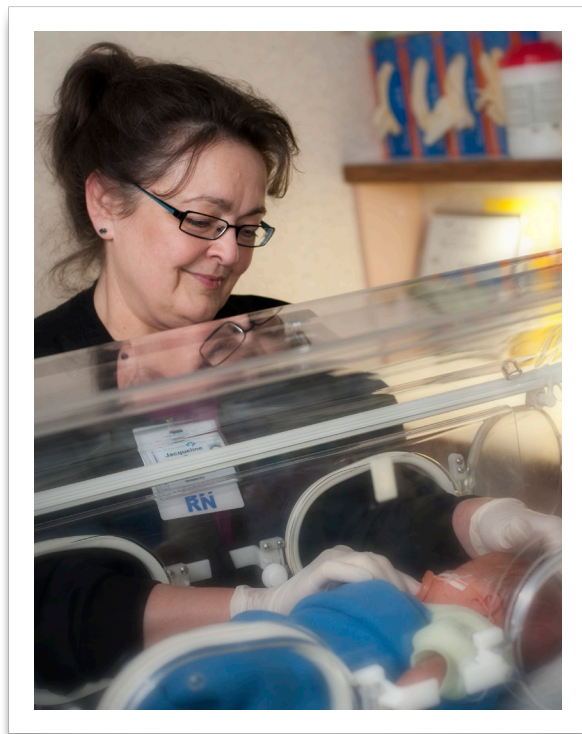
Case Manager: A case manager will be assigned to your baby upon admission. Should you and your family need services outside the hospital before or after your child is discharged, your case manager can connect you with providers such as home care nurses, outpatient therapists, and the Neonatal Development Follow-Up Clinic. A case manager can also connect you with the Birth to Three program in your county and address any concerns you may have including health insurance, counseling and parenting questions.

Pediatric Subspecialists: Depending on your baby's needs, a variety of physicians and specialists work with your neonatologist to coordinate specific treatments and ensure your child receives comprehensive care.

Lactation Consultant: Breast milk provides vital health benefits for all newborns. Breast milk is especially beneficial for premature and sick babies because it is easier for them to digest than formula and contains natural, immune boosting properties. Our certified lactation consultants are available to help you with your breastfeeding needs and can provide information and supplies for breastfeeding and/or pumping milk for your baby. You are welcome to use the NICU's private lactation room at any time.

Spiritual Care: A member of our Spiritual Care team will visit you during your baby's stay to provide spiritual counseling and support, offer sacraments including communion and baptism, assist with your cultural, ethnic and spiritual practices or help you connect with your own religious leader. Please call (920) 433-8162 or ask the nursing staff to help reach a member of our spiritual care team.

Other Professionals: Depending upon your baby's unique needs, his/her care team may also include dietitians, speech therapists, and x-ray and laboratory technicians. St. Vincent Children's Hospital has a tremendous depth of medical specialties and special high tech equipment that is not part of the NICU, but still available to your baby.



About Us

Release of information and treatment

You will be asked to sign release of information and treatment forms. These releases will authorize your baby's physicians to begin critical treatments in the event you cannot be reached. Your consent also enables our staff to notify community agencies that your baby has been admitted to the NICU, providing you with an important connection to the resources and support services available within your own community.

Hand Washing

Babies in the NICU have immature immune systems and are at high risk for getting infections. Our hand washing rules are designed to protect the health of your baby by keeping the NICU environment as clean as possible:

- Wash your hands frequently using soap and water or sanitizing gel.
- Every time you enter the NICU wash your hands thoroughly for two minutes using soap.
- Every time you handle diapers or other items that may be soiled.
- Every time you use your cell phone.
- Before you touch your baby.

Camera use

Please feel free to bring your camera and take pictures or video of your little one whenever you wish.

Cellular phone use

Recent studies have shown that the littlest patients do better in quiet environments. Although cell phone usage is allowed in the NICU, we ask that you please silence all phones and tablets, and refrain from using them when you are holding and caring for your baby.

Private Lactation room

Private breastfeeding is a challenge with a sick or premature baby but vital to his/her survival and normal development. If your baby is not ready to perform the complex and high energy task of feeding from the breast when he/she is first born, you will need to pump your milk so your breast milk can be delivered by tube to your baby's stomach. Our private lactation room and privacy curtains at bedside allow you to pump your breast milk in close proximity to your baby. Complimentary, one-on-one lactation consulting is provided upon request.

Live-in Suite

The NICU live-in suite allows parents the opportunity to spend a night or two in a home-like environment with the support of nurses close by. One of the NICU doctors or nurses will be discussing the "live in" experience with you a few days prior to discharge.

Meals

- For a charge, family members can order meal trays for themselves from the cafeteria by calling 48277 from the room phone.
- There is a cafeteria located on fourth floor, along with vending machines.
- Café Latte Da is located on the first floor and offers a selection of specialty coffee drinks, light breakfast items, sandwiches and salads.
- An ATM is also located on first floor by the gift shop.

Visiting Hours

Parents are an important part of the healing process and you are welcome and encouraged to be with your baby as often as possible, at any time. During times when you are unavailable to be at your baby's bedside, please feel free to call the NICU at (920) 433-8360 at any time to check on your child's condition. In order for staff to identify you as the parent you will be given an ID number to use when you call. Please ask to speak to your baby's nurse. If she can't come to the phone at the moment, leave a message and she will return your call promptly. You may also request to speak with a neonatologist at any time.

Friends and family are welcome in the NICU. For the safety of our tiny patients, however, certain seasonal visitation restrictions may apply to limit exposure to illness. Please ask your baby's nurse for the unit's current policy regarding nonparental visitation.

To further protect our patients and staff, access to the hospital is limited between the hours of 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. During these hours all doors into the hospital are locked except for the Webster Avenue entrance. Please check-in with Security when you enter the hospital during these hours. Security may stop you to see your NICU parent badge and notify the NICU that you are on your way to the unit.

Security

Access into our NICU is only obtained through the use of a badge or a special code. Once in the NICU, all individuals must pass by the nurse's station where they are required to check in and then are closely monitored. This close scrutiny creates a safe, secure environment for babies and staff members.

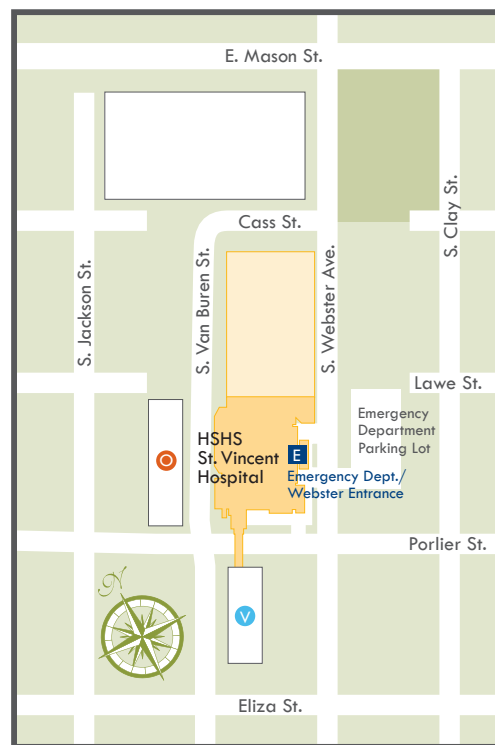
Family Lounge

In the event of an emergency with your baby or another baby nearby, you may be asked to leave the unit for a period of time and wait in the family lounge until a staff member notifies you that you are welcome to return. For patient privacy, you may also occasionally be asked to leave for a brief time when physicians are making rounds or giving a report.



Parking

You are welcome to use St. Vincent Children's Hospital's complimentary valet parking. Please drive into the Webster Avenue entrance and inform the parking attendant that your baby is a NICU patient. The attendant will park your car for you in the lot across the street from the hospital. If you prefer to park your car yourself you may do so. Just tell the attendant that you would like to park your own car and he or she will open the gate for you. Due to the limited number of valet spaces available, please ask your family and friends to park in the ramp.



- Visitors' Parking Ramp
- Emergency Department Entrance/Webster Entrance
- Outpatient Parking Lot

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