Partners in your baby’s care

Your first few days in the NICU

Your baby’s name: ____________________________
Pod: _________________________________
Room Number: _________________________

To contact NICU from a hospital phone, dial 2136.
When using your cell phone or a home line, dial 604-875-2136 or toll-free 1-888-300-3088.

BC Women’s Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) cares for newborns that have serious health concerns.
We provide clinical services that are not available elsewhere in the hospital or the province.

The NICU at BC Women’s Hospital is located in the Teck Acute Care Centre.

- The NICU has 70 single family rooms, split into 6 pods, or groups.
- Rabbit, Ladybug, Dragonfly and Hummingbird pods are on the 2nd floor.
- Bumblebee and Hedgehog pods are on the 3rd floor.
- Rabbit pod supports mothers and their babies who need intermediate level care. Mothers and their babies receive care together, in the same room, from the same nurse.

Please remember:
- The NICU is a nail polish and fragrance free environment.
- Parents are welcome to be in their baby’s room 24 hours a day.
Dear Parent,

On behalf of BC Women’s Hospital (BCW) Neonatal Program care team, we welcome you to the NICU. We feel privileged to partner with you to provide specialized care and support for your baby, you and your family during what can be a very stressful time. You can call any time 604-875-2136 or toll free at 1-888-300-3088.

Parents often ask us “What can I do to help my baby?” There are some very important things that you can do for your baby right away.

Take part in your baby’s care

*Being with your baby and providing as much of your baby’s hands on care as possible, is linked to improve baby’s neurodevelopmental outcomes. Your healing touch is an important part of your baby’s care and wellbeing.* You are an important member of your baby’s core care team. We encourage you to stay with your baby as much as you while your baby is in the NICU, including overnight. It is also very important that you take good care of yourself during your NICU stay. Part of this is finding a routine that works best for you and your family.

Express your early milk

*Even small amounts of mother’s own milk can help your baby fight off infections. Providing your own breast milk for your baby is shown to improve baby’s health outcomes. Babies that drink breastmilk often go home sooner.* If you plan to breastfeed your baby, it is very important that you begin to hand express your breast milk as soon as possible after giving birth. Your nurse will provide you with a pump, and teach you how to express your milk. When you express your milk regularly, you grow a steady supply of your own milk for your baby. If you do not plan to breastfeed, you can give your baby the health benefits of early milk by providing drops of colostrum that all mothers produce following birth. Your doctor and nurse can give you more information.

Your healing touch

While our NICU clinical team provides excellent medical care and expert support to ensure your baby’s comfort, *your baby still needs you.* All babies, especially those who need the specialized medical care provided in the NICU, need the love and caring touch of their families. Research also shows that *talking, singing, reading* to your baby, providing *Kangaroo Care or skin to skin* and *breastfeeding* are important ways you can support your baby’s health and development. If there are times when you are not able to be with your baby, we encourage you to arrange to have another family member or close friend stay with your baby. *Human contact is a very important part of the healing process, especially for premature and acutely ill babies.* Your baby’s health care providers are here to show you all the ways you can be involved in your baby’s care; you can care for your baby, even while your baby needs a lot of medical care.

Voice your questions or concerns

*Please ask lots of questions. It is normal to forget the answers, and it is ok to ask again!* Your baby’s health care providers are here to answer your questions and help you understand all aspects of your baby’s care. You know your baby best; if you have concerns please let us know.

Transferring to a NICU Closer to Home and Going Home with Baby

Our goal is to get you and your baby home as safely and as soon as possible. When babies no longer needs higher levels of NICU care, they are often transferred to one of our excellent NICU partner hospitals before being discharged home. Your baby’s doctor will meet with you to explain more when your baby reaches this important milestone.

We hope that your family’s stay at BC Women’s Hospital NICU is as comfortable as possible. We are here to support you and answer any questions you may have throughout your stay.

Sincerely,

Julie de Salaberry  
Director, Neonatal Program  
Neonatal Intensive Care & Neonatal Follow-Up

Dr. Sandesh Shivananda MD, FRCPC, M. Sc.  
Medical Director, NICU  
Associate Professor, Neonatologist
When your health care team determines that your baby no longer requires the specialized services of BCW NICU, they will plan with you a transfer to a NICU closer to home. Your team will give you as much notice as possible and, if possible, offer you a choice of hospitals.

*Most babies are not discharged home directly from BC Women’s NICU.*

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

You can find more detailed information about your baby’s stay in the NICU, and the resources and support available to you. Please use the television and remote in your baby’s room, and navigate to Patient Education > Neonatal ICU.

**Access cards**

Your family will receive 2 access cards when your baby is admitted. These cards will help you move freely through NICU. These cards allow access directly to patient rooms.

*It is very important for the safety and security of all the patients in the NICU that you:*

- Do not share your access card with others.
- Let your baby’s nurse know immediately if your card is lost or stolen. We will deactivate the card.
- **Return your access cards to your baby’s nurse** or the NICU front desk Unit Clerk before your baby is transferred or discharged.

Even with your access card, you must check in daily at the NICU front desk on the 2nd floor for your health screening.
Parents are not considered visitors in the NICU

You are part of your baby’s core care team and we invite you to spend as much time as possible with your baby.

As parents in the NICU, you are not alone. We are here to support you. Ask your baby’s nurse about daily rounds, and the communication tools in your room.

Your baby’s core care team

You are an essential part of your baby’s core care team.

This team includes:

- You and your partner or support person,
- Your baby’s bedside nurse (RN),
- Your baby’s neonatologist (Neo) or paediatrician (PED), and
- Your baby’s respiratory therapist (RT).

You have a core care team communication tool on the white board in your room. You can fill in the details each day with the names of your core care team members using the dry erase marker provided or ask your nurse to help.

Daily Rounds

At BC Women’s Hospital, collaboration and shared decision making with families are our standard of care. Each day, staff will included you in a discussion about your baby’s care. We will review your baby’s clinical information, and make plans for future care. We encourage you to participate daily.

On the back of the Neonatal Early Warning Signs (NEWS) document placed on your white board, you will find a discussion guide. This guide will help you to discuss your top priorities, things you have noticed about your baby, how we can support Kangaroo Care and healing touch, and your plan for feeding your baby.
**siblings**

- Siblings are welcome to visit any time. However, siblings are not allowed to stay overnight in your baby’s room.
- You will be asked to fill out a Daily Sibling Health Screening form before siblings enter the NICU. Please fill out this form at the NICU front desk, on the 2nd floor.
- Other children, such as cousins, must be 13+ years to visit.

**Visitors**

- Visitors will enter through the main NICU reception area for the NICU. This is across from the elevators, on the 2nd floor. If you and your baby have a visitor, a Unit Clerk will notify you. Please meet your visitor at the reception area, and bring them to your baby’s room.

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**Wash your hands to reduce your baby’s risk of infection**

*Babies in the NICU are at risk for infections. Cleaning your hands will reduce your baby’s risk of infection. Please remove nail polish and take off all rings, watches, and jewelry before cleaning your hands.*

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**Keeping Your Baby Safe**

**Clean your hands**

- **When you enter and leave the NICU:**
  - Use the handwashing sinks at the NICU entrances on the 2nd and 3rd floors. Do a 1 minute scrub with soap and warm water.
  - Or, use the alcohol-based hand sanitizer outside the NICU entrances on the 2nd and 3rd floors.
- **When you enter your baby’s room,** use alcohol-based hand sanitizer located next to the door.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer:
  - Before and after you touch your baby
  - After you touch food, phones, electronics, and equipment

Please remind visitors and Health Care Providers to do the same.

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**If you are feeling unwell, please talk with your baby’s nurse before coming into the NICU.**
Your baby’s room is also your room

Please store personal belongings in the cupboard and locking drawers.

You may keep food and drinks in the small fridge beside the couch.

Ask your baby’s nurse how to control the lights, use the locks on the drawers, and where to find bedding for the pull-out couch.

Cell phones and personal electronic devices

We strive for a quiet and healing environment in the NICU. Many babies in the NICU are sensitive to light and noise. Please keep any electronics in your baby’s room on quiet settings, and limit cell phone use at your baby’s bedside.

It is impossible to remove all the germs cell phones carry, even by using a sterile wipe.

To help protect your baby from infections, please clean your hands after using your cell phone and before touching your baby.

Avoid using your phone when holding or touching your baby.

The television and remote in your baby’s room

- If you wish to use the television in your baby’s room, please keep the volume low. Or, use the pillow speaker provided.
- The pillow speaker remote also includes a “nurse call” button. Please ask your nurse how to use the speaker remote. Please do not use the “water”, “pain” and “toilet” buttons to call your baby’s nurse, unless you are in the Rabbit Pod and you need help.
- To use the television with closed captioning, turn the power on from the remote, select “LIVE TV”, press the “OPT” button on the remote, then select “CLOSED CAPTIONS” then “ON” on the screen.
- We recommend that you limit television when:
  - Your baby is awake,
  - You are holding your baby, and
  - When your baby’s incubator is uncovered.
- Instead, we encourage you to read, sing and talk to your baby when they are awake and while you hold them.
- If you choose to use the television while holding your baby, please ensure they are facing towards you and away from TV.
- Please turn the TV off whenever you leave your baby’s room.

We may ask you to turn the television off during procedures, rounds, or when any health care providers are working with you or your baby.

Babies – particularly those born prematurely – are sensitive to light and sound. Canadian Pediatric Guidelines recommend no TV or screen time for children under the age of 2 years.
Learn more about infection control policies

On the TV in your baby’s room. Select
Patient Education > Neonatal ICU >
Keeping Your Baby Safe from the navigation on the TV screen.

To keep your baby safe from infections

- **Eat your meals in one of the family lounges, or outside the NICU.** Small snacks and drinks in covered containers are permitted in the rest area of your baby’s room (on couch by the window). However, we encourage you to take a break from your baby’s room when you eat a meal. Please do not leave open food in your baby’s room.
- **There are food vendors elsewhere on the hospital campus.** Please ask your nurse for directions to the cafeteria, Starbucks, Tim Horton’s or Second Cup.
- **Please do not eat in your baby’s room during admission, rounds, meetings with members of your baby’s care team, or any procedures.**
- **Please ask your nurse to call Housekeeping promptly if there is a spill or mess in your baby’s room.**
- **Keep the room and countertops free of clutter.**
- **The sink in your baby’s room is for hand washing ONLY.** Do not wash dishes, food containers, brush your teeth or pour any liquids other than water. Please see the amenities and map on page 15 and 16 to find bathrooms and showers near your baby’s room. Do not leave toiletries around the sink in your baby’s room.
- **For the safety of your baby and others, balloons, stuffed animals and fresh flowers are not permitted in the NICU.** Please let visitors know these items cannot enter into your baby’s room.
- **Please wear shoes in the NICU, other than when you are sleeping or resting in the rest area of your baby’s room.** Please do not put feet up on the furniture in your baby’s room when wearing shoes.
Your healing touch

You and your baby will benefit from staying close to each other for long periods of time as soon as possible after birth. Human contact is an essential part of healing, especially for premature and acutely ill babies. You can care for your baby through Kangaroo Care, facilitated tucking (hand hugging) or hand holding. Your healing touch is welcome and can also help soothe and calm your baby during nursing care and procedures like blood tests.

If your baby was born preterm, they are processing a lot of sensory input during their stay in NICU. It may be instinctual to rock or stroke your baby but this can overwhelm them. You can comfort your baby, and minimize their pain, with a constant and gentle hold.

Kangaroo Care is the skin-to-skin holding of your baby (wearing only a diaper) against your bare chest, secured with a wrap. Holding your baby in Kangaroo Care is one of the best things you can do to help your baby in the NICU. Your baby can feel your touch, smell you and hear your heartbeat. This will help your baby feel similar as to when they were in the womb.

Facilitated Tucking (hand hugging) is something you can do in preparation for Kangaroo Care or when Kangaroo Care is not possible. To do this, gently hold your baby's arms and legs folded in near their chest and stomach. The gentle pressure and boundary of your hand hug feels like the womb.

Hand Holding - At times, you may only be able to hold your baby's hand or tuck your baby's arms or legs. Every moment of parental touch combined with your soothing words will help your baby.

Learn more about the importance of healing touch and Kangaroo Care for both you and your baby

On Newborn Care page, select Kangaroo Care > Kangaroo Care – Information for Parents. The information is available in 6 languages – English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, Punjabi and Farsi.
Learning to breastfeed

The journey to breastfeeding your baby begins the day your baby is born. Every drop counts. Your early milk, called colostrum, provides your baby with valuable immune protection and nutrients.

The first step to breastfeeding is building your milk supply.

- **Hand expression** is when you use your hands to remove your milk from your breasts. Early initiation of milk expression helps with later milk supply. Hand expression is a useful skill to learn for any nursing person. You can hand express to stimulate milk production, relieve breast fullness, and feed your baby with expressed milk.

- **Oral Immune Therapy (OIT)** is a small amount of your breast milk. It provides benefits and immunity to your baby in the NICU. OIT can act like medicine for babies that cannot yet breastfeed.

- **“Hands on” Pumping** means using your hands to massage your breasts while using an electric breast pump, followed by hand expression. This increases your milk supply. It can also help you to produce milk that has more calories and fat.

**Getting started**

- Ask your baby’s nurse how you can start hand expressing your milk after giving birth. You can start hand expressing within the first 6 hours and, ideally, within the 1st hour, if possible. You can add an electric pump at 24 hours.

- Pumping at your baby’s bedside can help you make milk. You have your own pump in your baby’s room. There is also a NICU pump room in the Dragonfly pod on the 2nd floor (Please see the map on Page 16).

- For most effective milk production, pump at least 8-10 times within 24 hours.

- You have a pump kit in your room. Staff will deliver new pump parts to your room every evening. Please follow the instructions in your pump kit. These instructions explain how to clean the pump after each use through the day. Your nurse can answer questions about setting up and cleaning your pump, and labeling your milk.

- The stainless steel fridge in your baby’s room is for storing your milk for the Milk Handling Room to pick up each day. Milk will be picked up from your baby’s room between 8:30-9:30am and feeds will be delivered around 4:00pm daily.
Please place milk you have expressed in the “Milk Pick Up” bin in the milk fridge in your room, and tell your baby’s nurse that you have placed milk in the fridge.

The milk handling room can store up to 50 bottles of expressed milk for your baby. They will prepare and deliver your baby’s feeds until you baby can breastfeed.

If you have extra milk, please speak with a Lactation Consultant. They can teach you how to handle and store your milk safely.

Parking at the hospital:

Pay parking is in effect 24/7. BC Women’s offers a “pay-by stall number” system, with underground and surface level parking lots. You can pay for parking:

- At meters in the underground and surface parking lots, and at every entrance to the hospital
- By phone, using the PayByPhone app. The location code for the hospital is 9100.

Parking rates:

- $1.75 per 30 minutes
- $14.25 per 24 hours
- $63.75 per 7 day Pass
- $115.00 per 30 day Pass

Passes are non-refundable once purchased. If you have been discharged and have time remaining on your parking pass, you have the option of donating to a NICU family in need. To do this, please contact your Social Worker.

Did you know...

We have an online Family Support and Resource Centre. It is free for NICU families to view online resources and borrow eBooks, books, DVDs and other learning materials.

To find out more visit:

[Family Support and Resource Centre]
Resources and support

Your baby’s nurse can connect you with members of the NICU team for specific support. Or, you can contact these supports yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work</th>
<th>604-875-2149</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>604-875-2000 ext. 8626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lactation Consultants</td>
<td>604-875-2282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Engagement Advisors</td>
<td>604-875-2000 ext. 1011 or 8627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Patient Navigator</td>
<td>604-875-2348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Care</td>
<td>604-875-2753</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication is important

If you have any questions or concerns about your baby’s care, please ask your baby’s nurse or doctor. If you feel that your concern has not been resolved, you can speak directly with the following NICU team members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NICU Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL)</td>
<td>Will vary day to day</td>
<td></td>
<td>604-875-2136 and say “NICU CNL” when prompted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICU Program Coordinators (PC)</td>
<td>Charina Rivas</td>
<td><a href="mailto:CRivas@cw.bc.ca">CRivas@cw.bc.ca</a></td>
<td>(604) 875-2000 ext. 2241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marla Androsoff</td>
<td><a href="mailto:MAndrosoff@cw.bc.ca">MAndrosoff@cw.bc.ca</a></td>
<td>(604) 875-2000 ext. 3856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michelle Chang</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Michelle.Chang2@cw.bc.ca">Michelle.Chang2@cw.bc.ca</a></td>
<td>(604) 875-2345 ext. 6727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICU Program Managers (PM)</td>
<td>Cecilia Chow</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Cecilia.Chow@cw.bc.ca">Cecilia.Chow@cw.bc.ca</a></td>
<td>604-875-2595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jenna Johnston</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jenna.Johnston@phsa.ca">Jenna.Johnston@phsa.ca</a></td>
<td>(604) 875-2000 ext. 8158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Neonatal Program</td>
<td>Julie De Salaberry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:JDSalaberry@cw.bc.ca">JDSalaberry@cw.bc.ca</a></td>
<td>(604) 875-2768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Care Quality Office (PCQO)</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:pcqo@phsa.ca">pcqo@phsa.ca</a></td>
<td>1-888-875-3256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NICU parent drop-in classes and events

We offer drop-in classes where you can learn how you can care for your baby in the NICU. We also host events where you can meet other NICU parents.

You will find these classes and events on the calendar in your baby’s room.

Here is a list of possible classes and events on rotation in the NICU:

- **WHAT IS KANGAROO CARE?** Kangaroo Care means holding your baby skin to skin on your bare chest. Learn about the research and history behind Kangaroo Care, how and when you can provide this treatment, and the many benefits Kangaroo Care can offer.

- **BABY STEPS TO BREASTFEEDING** is a chance for you to speak with a Lactation Consultant. Lactation Consultants have special training in breastfeeding and can answer your questions about pumping, breast health, building and maintaining your milk supply, and breastfeeding. The instructor will tailor the session to fit the needs of the families that attend.

- **PREEMIE BRAINS: THE DO’S AND DON’TS** is taught by an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist. You will learn how a premature baby’s brain develops after birth, and ways that you can support your baby’s development. You will also learn about your baby’s cues and how to bond with your baby in the NICU.

- **BABY TALK** is a fun and interactive session that will talk about the value of reading and singing to your baby to promote early learning and language development. This class is taught by a librarian from the Vancouver Public Library.

- **GOING HOME** is taught by an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist. You will learn ways to interact and play with your baby to support their early development both in the NICU and once you are home. The instructor will also review car seat use and safe sleep positions.

- **MINDFULNESS in NICU** – much of our stress and pain comes from being pulled away from the present moment. Mindfulness is about encouraging awareness of oneself in the present moment, without judgement. Practicing mindfulness can help to improve our social and emotional well-being, and contribute to the ability to manage difficult or stressful situations. Examples of mindfulness practices include body scans, guided breathing meditations and other simple exercises, which can help us to refocus on the present and calm our minds.
NICU amenities

All NICU families are welcome to use the family washrooms, showers and lounges in the Ladybug, Dragonfly, Hummingbird, Hedgehog and Bumblebee pods.

2nd Floor:

*Family lounge and waiting room* (open to NICU families, extended families, and visitors)
- Kitchen area, with a refrigerator, toaster, microwaves, ice machine, coffee and tea
- Play space
- Child and adult seating areas with televisions
- Washer and dryer
- Washroom

*Rabbit Pod* (amenities for Rabbit Pod families only)
- Refreshment station with water, an ice machine, small fridge, coffee and tea
- 2 washrooms for families, 1 with a shower

*Ladybug Pod*
- Washroom for families

*Dragonfly Pod*
- 2 Washrooms, 1 with a shower
- Family bedroom
- Pump room (for all parents of NICU babies)
- Family quiet room and family meeting room, in the back corridor

*Hummingbird Pod*
- 2 washrooms for families
- Family lounge with water, an ice machine, washer and dryer, and a television

3rd Floor:

*Bumblebee Pod*
- 2 washrooms for families
- Family lounge with seating area and a television
- Water and ice machine
- Refrigerator, toaster, microwave, coffee and tea

*Hedgehog Pod*
- 1 washroom for families with a shower
- Family meeting or sitting room