

Welcome to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



Riverside University Health System – Medical Center
26520 Cactus Ave
(On the corner of Cactus Avenue & Nason Street
South of Alessandro & 60 Freeway)
Moreno Valley, CA 92555

**NICU Phone Number (24 hours a Day):
951-486-4890**

The staff of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) welcome you and your family to our unit. We know this can be a confusing and overwhelming place. We want to assure you that we are here to provide support, care and skill to both you and your baby during your time with us. As a parent you are a special part of the team. The comfort and love that only you can give is very important in your baby's progress. Our goal is to work with you as part of the team to provide the best care for your baby.

What is the NICU?

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, or NICU (sounds like nick-you), is a nursery for newborn babies who need special care after birth. Some babies come to the NICU because they are born early and others are full-term. Babies in the NICU need extra care and attention.

Important phone numbers

- **Social Worker: 951-486-4396**
- **Discharge Coordinator: 951-486-4886**
- **Child Life Specialist: 951-486-4354**
- **WIC (women, infants, children): 800-455-4942**
- **La Leche League : 800 – LA – LECHE (Breast feeding support)**
- **Breast feeding Loving Support hotline: 888-451-2499**
- **Patient Safety Hotline: 951-486-4699**

Your First Visit to the NICU

On your first visit you may feel overwhelmed by the equipment and noise. Your baby may seem tiny in the middle of all the equipment. The nurse will teach you about the equipment and routine of the NICU. Be sure to ask questions about things you do not understand. You might ask the same question every day. This is very normal.

You can touch and talk to your baby. Your baby's nurse can show you how to do this safely, especially if your baby was born early. This is very important for you to do, and your baby needs you!!

Who is caring for my baby?

The staff in the NICU receive special training in the care of sick babies. Some of the people you will meet are:

DOCTORS: The **Neonatologist** is a Pediatrician (doctor for children) with training in the care of sick newborn babies.

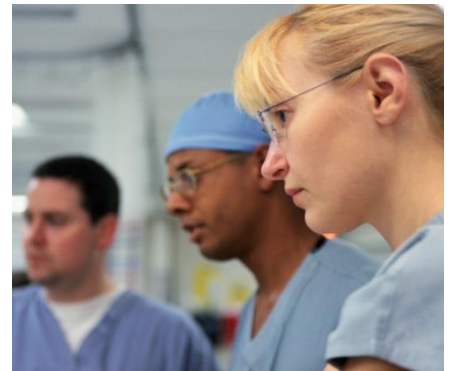
NURSES: A Registered Nurse (RN) takes care of each baby in the NICU. RNs in the NICU receive extra training to care for sick babies. They are a very important part of the NICU team. You will see them every time you come.

NEONATAL NURSE PRACTITIONERS: Nurse Practitioners work with the doctors. They write orders and provide special cares your baby. They can give you updates on your baby.

Other professionals you might meet in the NICU

It takes a team of people to care for a sick baby. Some other people you might meet in the NICU are:

- Respiratory Therapist (RT): focus on the breathing needs of your baby
- Social Workers
- Discharge planner and case manager
- Dietitian
- Physical therapist (PT), occupational therapist (OT), or speech/language therapist (SLP)
- Lactation Consultant work with mothers who are breastfeeding or pumping
- Child Life Specialist can help older siblings when a baby is hospitalized.



Coming to the NICU

We encourage you to spend as much time with your baby as you can. The NICU is open almost 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Two times a day, from 6:30am to 7:30pm the nurses give report. We ask that you visit or call before or after those times.

Security and Privacy in the NICU

The NICU is a secure unit. This keeps the babies safe. Only people with ID bands are able to enter. Bigger babies have a special band on. This is called a HUGS band. It is a special band that will not cause your baby any discomfort. Nurses that work in the NICU have special badges with a pink stripe. This lets people know that they are allowed to work with babies.

Each parent will receive an ID band that matches their baby. Please keep your band on at all times. Do not share your band with any other member of your family. Your baby will wear a matching band, the nurse will ask to check your band when you come to the unit.

As the parent you can bring in visitors to see your baby. The NICU is a busy place, only two people at a time can be at the bedside. One person must have the ID band on. Visitors that come in must be older than 14 years of age. They must be in good health (this means no fevers, no coughing, or other signs of being sick).

Getting information about your baby

When you can't be with your baby, you can always call to check on your baby. **Our phone number is 951-486-4890. You can call day or night.**



Please feel free to ask questions about your baby. There is no question that is too small or silly.

It is helpful to write down questions before talking to the nurse or doctor. If you do not remember the answer ask again. We want to help you understand.

As your baby's illness changes, the answers will change too. There is so much to learn in a short time. Many parents feel overwhelmed with all the information.

Parents can call any time to get updates about their baby. When you call, the nurse will ask you the special code. Usually this is the number on the ID band. The nurse will only give updates if the ID number matches the number on file. We will only give updates to people with the special ID band. This is to protect your privacy. You will want to make plans to update your family and friends about your baby.



Hand washing and Infections in the NICU



All babies are fragile. Babies in the NICU need protection from germs. When you come to the NICU, even if only for a fast visit, wash your hands and arms. Wash your hands every time you come in.

When you enter the NICU:

1. Take off any rings, watches, and bracelets and put them in your pocket or purse.
2. Wash your hands and arms for 3 minutes. Be sure to wash under your nails and between each finger. Rinse your hands and arms well and then pat them dry.
3. Try not to touch your face or hair after you have washed your hands.
4. If you have long hair, try to tie it back.

While at your baby's bedside:

1. Wash your hands or use the hand purifier before touching your baby.
2. Wash your hands after changing the diaper.
3. If you have more than one baby in the NICU, wash your hands before holding or touching the other baby.



ITEMS YOU CAN PROVIDE FOR YOUR BABY:

BREAST MILK

A SCENT CLOTH (PLACED WITH THE MOM AND DAD THEN PLACED NEXT TO BABY)

A LARGE BLANKET TO COVER THE INCUBATOR

T-SHIRTS, HATS AND SOCKS

PICTURES AND LETTERS TO PERSONALIZE YOUR BABY'S BED (NO STUFFED TOYS PLEASE)

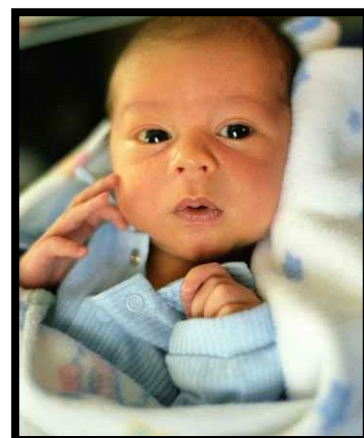
Holding your Baby in the NICU



Babies born early may need to stay in their warm bed for a few days. You will need to learn a special way to hold them. This special way of holding is called Kangaroo Care or skin-to-skin. Ask your nurse about this during the first week your baby is in the NICU.

Skin to skin care is a quiet time for you and your baby. Plan to visit for more than one hour when planning to hold your baby skin to skin, the longer the better.

Every baby, and even big babies like to be held. Older babies may be able to be wrapped in a blanket and held outside of the bed. There are times when the baby is too sick to be held. Your nurse or doctor will guide you. Ask your nurse for assistance with all the wires and equipment.



Big brothers and sisters

Big brothers and sisters may want to see the baby. They can have a special visit. Ask your nurse, or social worker, to make an appointment with the Child Life Specialist. Brothers and sisters 2 to 14 years old need to show proof of current shots. This includes the flu shot during the winter months. They cannot have any signs of cold or flu when visiting.

Brothers and sisters may not be able to visit in the winter. This is to protect the baby from colds and flu.



What if I need

extra help??

You will want to understand the treatment your baby is getting. You can call anytime to talk to the doctor. You can also talk to the doctor when you visit. The doctor will see your baby every day. The best times to talk to the doctor is during the daytime. You can get updates at night time too.

You may feel guilty, sad, or upset and afraid. The Social Worker is here to help and can talk to you about these feelings. She will give you a list of resources to help you cope with your baby's time in the NICU. To contact the NICU Social Worker, call: 951-486-4183.

Breast-feeding and pumping milk

Your breast milk is very important. Even if your baby can't nurse from the breast yet. ***We think of the breast milk you provide as a medicine for your baby.***

In the beginning you may only get a drop or two when you pump. Every drop is precious. If your baby is not yet eating, ask the nurse to show you how to swab your baby's mouth with a cotton tip swab dipped in your milk.

Talk to the nurse about pumping and storing your milk. Breast pumps are available. Lactation specialists can answer your questions and support breast milk feedings. If you need help using the breast pump, talk to your nurse.

If you are unable to breast feed or pump, the nurse or doctor will talk to you. There are other ways of feeding your baby.

- *BRIGHT LIGHTS CAN BOTHER NEWBORNS, ESPECIALLY SMALL BABIES. THE NICU MAY KEEP THE LIGHTS LOW, TO HELP THE INFANT SLEEP BETTER. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE ASK THE NURSE IF YOU CAN PLACE A BLANKET OVER THE BED.*
- *USE A SOFT VOICE. NOISES CAN ALSO BOTHER YOUR BABY. MOST NEWBORNS RESPOND WELL TO A QUIET, PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT. YOU CAN HELP BY TALKING A SOFT QUIET VOICE WHILE IN THE NICU.*
- *CUDDLE WITH YOUR PREEMIE. PROVIDE SKIN TO SKIN CARE, OR KANGAROO CARE, WHEN POSSIBLE.*
- *THE NURSE WILL HELP, ESPECIALLY THE FIRST TIME YOU TRY SOMETHING NEW*