

Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital

# Welcome to the Neonatal Unit



Information for baby's parents and carers

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## Introduction

Congratulations on the birth of your baby.

We understand that having a baby admitted to a neonatal unit is often an unexpected and unsettling experience for parents. We hope this booklet will help provide you with information and highlight the support that we can offer. If you have any questions during your stay with us please ask, we are happy to help.

If you are unable to visit you can also telephone to enquire about your baby's progress. To maintain confidentiality we cannot give information to other family members or friends.

**Reception:** 020 3313 5158

**Intensive Care:** 020 3313 3174

**High Dependency and Special Care:** 020 3313 3908



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## Getting to know the unit

The neonatal unit at Queen Charlottes & Chelsea Hospital is a tertiary referral centre Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and provides all levels of medical care.

The neonatal unit has two main areas and each has a number of small rooms:

- Intensive Care (IC)
- High Dependency Care (HDC) and Special Care (SC)

In our IC rooms we care for babies who are very small and premature and also term babies who are unwell and need close observation. Most of the babies in IC will be looked after in an incubator and are often attached to a monitor and other special equipment. Once your baby no longer requires IC they may be moved to the HDC and SC area. In these rooms some babies may still need to be in an incubator but are often nursed in a cot.

There is a nurse in each room to look after your baby. Your baby's nurse will be able to update you about your baby's care and progress. The doctors will see your baby regularly and will be happy to talk to you about your baby and answer any questions you may have.

Sometimes you may find that your baby has moved to another room. If this is the case we will contact you to let you know. If the move happens overnight we will contact you the following morning.

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## What happens when your baby is admitted to the neonatal unit?

Having a baby admitted to a neonatal unit is naturally worrying for parents. You may feel frightened or anxious about visiting your baby. We are here to help you get to know your baby and become involved in their care. We will ensure that you receive the information and support you need.

When your baby is admitted to the neonatal unit we aim to get them settled as quickly as possible. We will give you an admission pack containing leaflets and information to help guide you through your baby's stay.

### Visiting times

Parents are part of the team! Therefore, you are welcome at any time, day or night.

- Only your baby's brothers and sisters may visit between 15.00 and 19.00.
- Only four named visitors are allowed to visit between 15.00 and 19.00. No changes to be named visitors are permitted for the duration of your baby's stay
- In the winter months, to reduce the risk of infections we do not allow any visitors to the unit other than baby's brothers and sisters. We will let you know when the winter visiting times are in place.

Please explain to your named visitors that they may only visit with you and we limit the number of visitors at the cot side to 3 people for short periods of time.

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It is important that visitors are well when they come to the unit. Do NOT come to the unit if you or any visitors are sick or feeling unwell as our babies are vulnerable to infections. Anyone who is unwell or recovering from any illnesses such as diarrhoea, vomiting, coughs, colds, flu or cold sores should not visit. If you are unsure then please talk to your baby's nurse so that we can advise you.

## Continuing care for your baby

There are three levels of neonatal units within the NHS: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Local Neonatal Unit (LNU) and Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU).

Once your baby no longer requires intensive care and is stable your baby will be transferred to your local hospital for ongoing care. This may not be the same hospital at which you booked your pregnancy or where your baby was born. This is to ensure we have cots available for babies needing intensive care. This is how neonatal care is organised nationally.

We work closely with other neonatal units in London to ensure we have cots available for babies needing intensive care.

Transfer to your local hospital allows the neonatal and follow up team to get to know your baby. We will help you arrange a visit to the neonatal unit in preparation for transfer. As you get ready for home you will be spending more time every day bonding, caring for your baby and establishing feeding.

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## Going home

Your baby may be discharged from the neonatal unit to the postnatal ward, another neonatal unit or home.

The length of time your baby stays with us will depend on their progress and level of care they require. If your baby was born early you may not have had the chance to prepare. Towards the end of your baby's stay you will need to spend more time with them and therefore you should prepare your home and shop for what you need before you reach this point. We can help you plan and prepare for going home, so please ask your baby's nurse.

## Neonatal Outreach Team

The Neonatal Outreach Team will support you in preparing to take your baby home. This includes providing information and training on what you need to get ready for your baby. We also provide Basic Life Support training for all parents. We can facilitate early discharge with home tube feeding for babies who are learning to breast feed.

We also provide support and training to parents of babies with more complex needs including home oxygen. The team will visit your baby at home and work with Health Visitors to support you.

## Research: Be part of something special

We are one of the leading research centres in the UK. Research is vital in improving the care we deliver and you may be approached to take part in a study that is appropriate for



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your baby's condition. Depending on the study we will either need your formal consent or will give you the option to opt out.

## Protecting babies from infection

On entering the neonatal unit all coats and outdoor clothing **MUST** be left at the unit entrance. There are hooks next to the sinks for your coats, but ensure that you do not leave any valuable items there.

All visitors **MUST** roll-up their sleeves and remove watches, bracelets and large rings. All visitors **MUST** wash and gel their hands before entering the neonatal unit and also when entering each individual room. This helps to protect all vulnerable babies who are admitted to the neonatal unit.

There is hand gel by every sink and by each cot or incubator. Please gel your hands before and after touching your baby and their surroundings.

## Mobile phone use

You must clean your mobile phone on entry to the unit using the wipes provided and use hand gel between touching your phone and touching your baby.

Please keep your phone on silent mode. It can be distracting to other parents and staff.

Please do not make phone calls in the nurseries; your time with your baby is precious and is best spent bonding and paying attention to their needs.

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## What do you need to bring for your baby?

We provide most things your baby will need during their stay. However we do ask that you bring in the following items:

- nappies
- sunflower or coconut oil
- pillow for feeding
- cotton wool
- cotton buds

We have plenty of clothes and blankets of all sizes for your baby. You can bring your own clothes and blankets but you will need to wash them at home. Please label them with your baby's name so that they are easier to locate if they get mixed in with our washing.

If you have anything else that you would like to bring in for your baby, discuss it with your nurse and they will be able to advise you.

You may want to bring in a pillow to support you with comfortable feeding.

## Parents' sitting room

There is a sitting room in the neonatal unit where you can rest and eat. There are tea and coffee making facilities, as well as toys for your baby's brothers and sisters. Children must be supervised at all times. Unfortunately, the room is small so only your named visitors can use this room. We ask you to show consideration to others by keeping this room tidy.

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## Parents' accommodation

We have a small number of bedrooms allowing parents to stay overnight at the hospital. The rooms are allocated and prioritised as below:

- parents with a very sick baby
- mothers establishing breastfeeding
- parents preparing to take their baby home
- parents who have to travel a long distance to visit their baby

We cannot always guarantee you a room: 48 hours is the maximum length of stay unless there are special circumstances. We may need to ask you to vacate your room at short notice if there is a more urgent need.

Your visitors are not allowed in these rooms.

## Places to eat at Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea and Hammersmith Hospital

We can provide a lunchbox for parents who are here during the day. Please tell the ward clerk at reception in the morning to allow them enough time to order your meal. Otherwise there are a wide range of places to eat and shop inside and outside the hospital. Please visit our website for more information:

[www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations/hammersmith-hospital/facilities](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations/hammersmith-hospital/facilities)

You are welcome to order takeaways or bring food from outside to eat in the parents' sitting room; however we ask that you arrange to meet your delivery driver outside the building to avoid disruption to our staff.

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## Breastfeeding

We encourage all mothers to breastfeed. Breast milk is the best food for babies. Some babies might not be able to feed from the breast, but we can still give them your milk. We will give you a pack with an expressing kit, 'Miniboo' cloth and a leaflet with more information about breastfeeding and expressing. Your nurse or midwife will show you how to express and ensure that your milk is labelled and stored correctly

You can store your breast milk in the fridge in your baby's nursery or we can store it in the freezer in the milk kitchen. If you need further support with expressing please ask your baby's nurse. They will be able to help you or refer you to our breastfeeding specialist.

There is an expressing room on the neonatal unit. The pumps are mobile so you can express near your baby. To prevent infections, please wipe the pump before and after use.

## Donor breast milk

If you do not have enough breast milk, the nurses or doctors may suggest giving your baby donor breast milk. Donor breast milk has been provided by carefully screened, healthy donors and is pasteurised (heat-treated). Please ask your baby's nurse for more information on this. We will ask for your permission before giving your baby donor milk.

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## Pastoral and religious support

There is a multi-faith chapel open to everyone and a Muslim prayer room on the South Corridor of Hammersmith Hospital. If you need spiritual, emotional and pastoral support or advice, we will be happy to contact a chaplain or leader of your faith for you.

## Parents' support

When your baby is on a neonatal unit it can be both physically and emotionally demanding. We invite you to come to our parents' group that meets weekly in the parents' sitting room. This is an opportunity to meet other parents, discuss your concerns and anxieties with one of the clinical psychologists or nurses.

The parents' group is tailored to your needs, but topics covered include:

- getting to know your baby
- day to day stresses while your baby is in hospital
- introducing siblings to their new brother or sister
- hopes and fears for the future

If you would prefer to talk to one of the psychologists in private, please tell you baby's nurse. It is also possible to arrange an appointment after your baby has been discharged.

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## Integrated family delivered care (IFDC)

We want to create a nurturing environment to support and encourage you to be involved in your baby's care. The nurses will teach you how to become more involved in caring for your baby.

We have an App with more information to you guide through your baby's journey.

Search for IFDC in the App Store or Google Play Store. You can also scan this QR code:



Educate Engage Empower Enable

Alternatively you can also find this information on the IFDC website [www.imperial-familyintegratedcare.com](http://www.imperial-familyintegratedcare.com)

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## Ward rounds

Ward rounds on the unit usually start at 09.30 and may last until midday. During this time the doctors review your baby's condition and agree a management plan for the day. The nurse looking after your baby will be part of this review. We encourage you to participate in the clinical ward rounds and contribute to the discussion.

There is a weekly multidisciplinary team ward round for babies where you can 'present' your baby and have the opportunity to discuss the plan for the week ahead. The multi-disciplinary team includes breastfeeding specialists, dieticians, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists as well as the doctors and nurses looking after your baby. Your baby's nurse will help you prepare to present your baby and any questions you may have.

## Doctors' and nurses' handovers

There is an allocated nurse looking after your baby at all times. Depending on your baby's condition, nurses may be looking after between 1 and 4 babies at the same time. During the nursing handover your baby's nurse will give a summary of your baby's care to the next nurse, detailing any changes that have occurred during their shift.

There is also a team of doctors on the neonatal unit. During their handovers they will discuss your baby's care.

Your baby will have a daily care plan to which you can contribute, eg, when you are able to visit, their feeding plan and any cares you want to do for your baby.

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During ward rounds and handovers, we will give you headphones to wear while other babies are being discussed to maintain confidentiality and to respect the privacy of other parents in the unit.

## Neonatal follow-up

After discharge your baby will be followed up in the Neonatal Clinic at Hammersmith Hospital or in your local hospital. This appointment will be arranged and given to you on discharge or sent by post. If your baby needs to be seen by other members of the team (for example, physiotherapy) this will also be arranged.

For extra support after discharge you can attend our Next Steps groups. We will ask you for your email address before discharge to send you details.

## Registering your baby's birth

You are required by law to register your baby's birth within 42 days (6 weeks) of their birth. If your baby was born at Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital you should register the birth at the Hammersmith and Fulham Register Office. For more information or to book an appointment call 020 8753 2140. Alternatively, you can book an appointment via the website below (or search for Hammersmith and Fulham Register Office):

[www.lbhf.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-marriages/births/how-register-birth](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-marriages/births/how-register-birth)

If your baby was born in another hospital, you need to register their birth with the local office.



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## Registering with a GP/health visitor

After registering your baby's birth you need to register with your GP so that you can access the necessary health resources for your baby. Your health visitor will be allocated by your GP. The neonatal team will make contact with your health visitor and will stay in regular contact to update them with your baby's progress.

## Travelling to Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital

The neonatal unit is located on the fourth floor of the Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital. For more information about travelling to and from the hospital please visit our Trust website:

[www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations/queen-charlottes-and-chelsea-hospital/find-us](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations/queen-charlottes-and-chelsea-hospital/find-us)

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## Charity support

The Neonatal Unit is supported by COSMIC Charity, previously the Winnicott Foundation. This charity helps our unit with equipment, staff education, ward refurbishment and parent support. Parent information and support is provided by Bliss UK and the hospital is supported by the Imperial Health Charity.

For more information on these organisations please visit:

- [www.cosmiccharity.org.uk](http://www.cosmiccharity.org.uk)
- [www.imperialcharity.org.uk](http://www.imperialcharity.org.uk)
- [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)



## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at **imperial.pals@nhs.net** The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

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Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY

Email: **ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net**

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: **imperial.communications@nhs.net**

## Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for NHS Wi-Fi or WiFiSPARK\_PREMIUM

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