



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH KNOWLEDGE, COMPASSION & HOPE

A gentle guide for parents navigating the neonatal journey



Small hands

Big strength

Endless hope

EVIDENCE-BASED NEONATAL EDUCATION | ENGLISH & PORTUGUESE

Welcome

If you're reading this, your baby may have recently been admitted to the neonatal unit. You may be feeling worried, overwhelmed or unsure of what comes next.



Remember



There's no right way to feel. Every family's experience is different, and it's ok to ask questions, seek support, and take one day at a time.

This guide was created to help you understand what to expect, explain some of the most common questions parents ask, and provide evidence-based information in a way that's clear, compassionate and reassuring.

As a neonatal nurse, I've had the privilege of caring for babies and supporting families during some of their most challenging moments. My hope is that these pages help you feel a little more informed, a little more confident, and above all, remind you that you're not alone.

With care,

The Neonatal Nurse Mum





What is a neonatal unit?

A neonatal unit provides specialist care for babies who are born prematurely, are unwell, or need extra support after birth.

Every baby is unique, and being admitted doesn't always mean your baby is seriously ill.

1. Why has my baby been admitted?

- * Prematurity
- * Breathing difficulties
- * Low blood sugar
- * Jaundice
- * Infection
- * Feeding support

3. Will I be able to stay with my baby?

Every neonatal unit is different, but parents are encouraged to spend as much time as possible with their baby and to be actively involved in their care. Some units also have family rooms, particularly for babies who are preparing to go home or need longer-term care.

2. Who will care for my baby?

- Neonatal nurses
- Neonatal doctors
- Nursery nurses
- Student midwives/nurses
- Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
- Infant feeding team
- Outreach team
- Physiotherapists
- Dietitians
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and language therapists
- Pharmacists
- Family support teams



DID
YOU
KNOW?

Parents are an important part of the neonatal team. Your voice, touch and presence help your baby feel safe and supported, and you are encouraged to be involved in their care whenever possible.

Meet your baby's care team

During your baby's stay, you may meet a range of healthcare professionals. Each member of the team has a different role, but they all work together to provide the best possible care for your baby and support your family.



Neonatal Nurse

Provides day-to-day care for your baby, monitors their progress, administers medications, supports feeding, support and advocates for parents/families.



Neonatologist

A doctor who specialises in caring for newborn babies, particularly those born prematurely or who require specialist medical care.



Pharmacist

Checks and prepares medicines to make sure they are safe and appropriate for your baby.

PARENTS & FAMILY

You are an essential part of your baby's care team. Your love, involvement and knowledge of your baby make a real difference every day.



Dietitian

Helps ensure your baby receives the right nutrition to support healthy growth and development



ANNP

An Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner assesses babies, prescribes treatment and works closely with the medical and nursing teams.



Infant feeding team

Supports feeding, breastfeeding and expressing, helping your baby receive the nutrition they need while offering guidance and encouragement to your family.

How can you be involved in your baby's care?

Every moment together makes a difference.

❤️ Skin-to-skin (Kangaroo Care)

Holding your baby skin-to-skin helps regulate their temperature, heart rate and breathing while strengthening your bond. Even short periods can have lasting benefits.

🍼 Feeding your baby

Whether you're breastfeeding, expressing breast milk or bottle feeding, you are playing an important role in your baby's growth. Your healthcare team will support you every step of the way.

👐 Everyday care

As your baby becomes more stable, you'll be encouraged to help with nappy changes, washing, comforting and reading your baby's cues. These moments build confidence and strengthen your bond.



**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

Even if your baby is too unwell to be held, your gentle touch, your voice and your presence can still provide comfort and reassurance

Questions you may have

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There is no such thing as a silly question. Your neonatal team is here to support you, explain your baby's care, and help you feel confident every step of the way.

? Can I hold my baby 🧒

Yes, in many cases. Even babies receiving intensive care may be able to enjoy skin-to-skin contact when it is safe to do so. Your baby's nurse will guide you.

? When can my baby go home 🏠

Every baby's journey is different. Your baby will go home when they are medically ready. This usually means they are feeding well, growing, maintaining their temperature and no longer need hospital care.

? Will my baby be in pain 💙

Your baby's comfort is always a priority. The neonatal team carefully assesses pain and uses gentle strategies to keep your baby as comfortable as possible.

? Can I ask questions 💬

Of course! There is no such thing as a silly question. We encourage you to ask whenever you are unsure. Understanding your baby's care helps you feel more confident and involved as part of the team.



A Personal Message

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide.

Having a baby admitted to the neonatal unit can bring many different emotions. It is normal to feel worried, overwhelmed, or unsure of what lies ahead.

I hope this guide has helped you understand a little more about the neonatal unit and reminded you that you are an important part of your baby's care.

As a neonatal nurse, I have had the privilege of caring for many babies and families. As a mum, I also understand how powerful reassurance, kindness, and clear information can be during uncertain times.

Remember, you are not expected to know everything. Take each day as it comes, ask questions, and celebrate every little step forward.

Be kind to yourself. You are doing better than you think.

Disclaimer: this guide is intended for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice. If you have any concerns about your baby, speak to your neonatal healthcare team.



With care
Sofia

The Neonatal Nurse Mum

"I know these are scary and uncertain times, but never underestimate the power of your love. To your baby, your touch, your voice, and your presence mean more than you can imagine."

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