

Your NICU Journey

Dear Families,

The physicians, nurses, and all staff of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) welcome you to the nursery!

Your infant's arrival is an exciting event. However, if your infant arrives earlier than expected or experiences illness or difficulty, it may be frightening. Celebrating the joy of a new addition to the family, and dreams of the future may be put on hold when an infant is sick or premature. We recognize that this is a challenging time for you and your family. Our experienced and qualified staff is here to help you understand and navigate any bumps in your baby's road to wellness.

We believe that only you can provide the special care and tenderness of a parent. You are the most valued member of your infant's team. It is our goal to make you as comfortable as possible as you spend time with your infant, and to respect and nurture the unique bond between you. Our guiding principal in the design of our nursery is that you are providing care and making choices for your baby from the beginning, with the help of your care team. Our desire is to promote open communication so that you feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns.

Knowing more about us and more about your baby will help you feel comfortable caring for your baby in the NICU. The information provided here will give you an introduction to the unit and help prepare you for your journey.

We are here to welcome and support you. Please let us know what we can do to make your experience easier.

Sincerely,

Your NICU Staff

Keeping Your Baby Safe – a Guide to Hand Washing

NICU babies are extremely vulnerable to infection and the best way to fight the spread of disease is by washing your hands. For your baby's safety, please follow these guidelines for washing your hands upon entry to the unit:

- Remove watches, bracelets, rings and any other jewelry
- Thoroughly wet your hands
- Apply soap and vigorously rub hands together for at least 15 seconds
- Take special care to rub in between your fingers and the front and back of your hands
- Rinse hands thoroughly
- Dry your hands

Using waterless hand cleanser (dispensers available throughout the unit):

- Apply a grape-sized amount on to the palm of your hand and then rub hands together, making sure you get the cleanser in between your fingers
- Do not rinse the cleanser off with water
- Let hands dry completely

Before touching your baby:

- Rewash your hands in the same manner as above, or
- Use the waterless hand cleaner (dispensers available throughout the unit and at your baby's bedside)
- If you have multiples, please cleanse hands between siblings

If you leave the unit and then return:

- Rewash your hands in the same manner as above or use the waterless cleanser

After touching your baby:

- Rewash your hands in the same manner or use the waterless cleanser every time you touch your baby, including diapering and feeding and before pumping or breastfeeding.



Your Baby's Health Care Team

Your baby's health care team supports and guides you as a valued member. Other members of the health care team include:

- **Physicians** – You will meet providers such as neonatologists, pediatricians, and family practice doctors who will skillfully lead your infant's care.
- **Nurses** – Your bedside nurses will be there for you and your baby providing continual expert care, assistance, and support.
- **Lactation Consultants** – Help us maintain a "Baby Friendly" designation to promote optimal health of your infant; they will support your goals regarding breastfeeding and provision of breast milk.
- **Respiratory Therapists** – These professionals will help meet special needs to support an infant's developing lungs.
- **Dieticians** – Registered dieticians are available to help meet all the nutritional needs of your baby.
- **Developmental Therapists** – Occupational/ Physical/ Speech therapists with specialized training in infant development will help plan beneficial activities.
- **Social Workers** – Licensed social workers will help identify and additional needs for support and assist in accessing resources for your family.
- **Pharmacists** – These professionals play an important role in management of medications for your baby.

The Single Family Room Design

Kootenai Health is the only facility in our region to offer accommodations for your infant in a new private and spacious room. These rooms have been specifically designed to accommodate at least one parent who wishes to stay with baby. Benefits of this design have been well researched. Some potential benefits include more time spent with family, earlier acquisition of feeding skills, healthier weights, fewer procedures, and reduced risk for infection or sepsis, less stress and pain, and improvement in overall development.

The Nicview Camera System

We are pleased to be able to offer all families with an infant in our unit the option of being able to view their infants on any mobile device. The Nicview camera system is a state-of-the-art system that provides secure live streams video of your baby when you are not able to be there in person. By offering an access code that is specific to your infant, you may personally choose to allow siblings, relatives, and friends to view your new arrival from anywhere in the United States and around the world.

Ticket to Discharge

Each infant admitted to the NICU follows a unique path. Your infant's progress toward their goals will be assessed and discussed with you throughout their stay. Skilled caregivers will assist you and your baby to achieve a smooth transition from hospital to home through careful discharge planning.

Safe Sleep Practices

We are committed to providing the most current information relating to the awareness of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death or SUIDS/ SIDS. We will educate you thoroughly on safe sleep practices and assist you in accessing resources if needed to ensure a safe sleep environment for your baby at home.