

Useful information: Neonatal Support

The first time you enter the neonatal unit (NICU) can be overwhelming, there's lots of equipment everywhere, beeps and machine noises, and of course your little baby is in amongst it all. It's important to try to remember that everything is in place to deliver the very best care for your baby.

The excellent staff who are dedicated to looking after all the babies in their care will be happy to settle you into the environment, and explain what everything is and what is happening.

Often as a mother within NICU you will be recovering from giving birth, it is therefore really important to remember to look after yourself as much as possible, by taking rests when you need them, eating enough meals per day and also keeping on top of your pain medication if you need it.

Information about NICU is available on the [Evelina London Children's Hospital website](https://www Evelina London Children's Hospital website)

Hints and Tips from parents:

- NICU is very warm, therefore light, comfy clothing is recommended – yoga pants / tracksuit bottoms & vest/t-shirts etc.
- The NICU staff will encourage you to hold your baby, and to have skin-to-skin contact as much as is possible.
- The NICU staff will provide you with lots of support when it comes to feeding your baby, whether that's through expressing, breastfeeding or bottle feeding.
- Pack/purchase snacks to ensure sure you have food to keep you going, in case you miss some meal times. Keep in mind you will not be able to eat inside NICU, and therefore above all we recommend trying to ensure you eat breakfast, lunch and dinner as normal.
- Bring your own pillow with you to sit in NICU, the chairs can be uncomfortable after long periods of time and this can help to support your baby.
- If you're breastfeeding or expressing milk the hospital provides vouchers to use for purchasing food in hospital – take advantage of this as food can quickly become expensive!
- If your baby is fed by NG tube parents are allowed to learn how to feed them this way – take advice from the staff and believe in yourself, it can feel empowering to know you are caring for your baby. Of course, if you're not comfortable doing this, that is also absolutely understandable too.
- The midwife team will help you manage your own care and do make sure to ask them if you have any questions or need help acquiring pain medication etc. If you're recovering from a c-section try to remember to take your pain medication at the correct time, to ensure you don't feel additional pain and discomfort.

Useful links

Bliss is a charity which specialises in babies born prematurely or with medical conditions - it has excellent information about the neonatal (NICU) experience, which is detailed here:

- .About neonatal care
- .Looking after your baby on the neonatal unit
- .How parents can be involved in their babies care in NICU
- .Tips for changing your baby's nappy in NICU

.Advice on expressing

.Advice on NG Tube Feeding