



# **A guide for parents and visitors attending the neonatal unit**

Managed Clinical Network (MCN) for Neonatology  
West of Scotland  
Neonatal Guideline

This guide is to make sure we provide a safe and family focused environment for your baby and your family. We have used feedback from parents' representative groups to write this guide. We want to maintain your privacy, and that of other families whilst taking measures to control infection. You are partners in the care of your baby and we will do everything to assist you in this.

The guide has been created for use in all the neonatal units in the West of Scotland Neonatal Network. Although we aim to provide consistency across all the neonatal units there will be some variation between the units but we will try to minimise this. We encourage you to discuss any concerns you have with the nursing and medical team in your unit.

## **Parents and Visitors attending the neonatal unit**

### **Important actions for all visitors that will protect babies from infection:**

- Hand washing is essential for everyone coming in to the department. Hand washing facilities differ between the units. Please make sure that you are aware of local arrangements including the use of hand gels at the entrance to units and at the cot side.
- Please remove any outdoor clothing (e.g. coats and jackets) before entering any room. Roll up long sleeves above your elbow, and remove any jewellery on your hands or wrists, other than a plain wedding band, before touching your baby.
- Parents are welcome at any time. We want you to be involved as partners in care, and to provide as much of your baby's care as possible.
- Baby's brothers and sisters are welcome. However, young children can find neonatal units strange or even boring so it is best to bring some toys and snacks to help keep them amused

or another adult to help keep them entertained. Parents should try to make sure children are kept occupied, quiet, and near to family members at all times.

- Other adult relatives and family friends can visit if accompanied by a parent. However, please limit visitors to your close family and friends and limit the number that visit at one time. Lots of different people coming and going can be disruptive to babies and other families.
- If your baby is receiving intensive or high dependency care then we will only allow two visitors at a time, one of whom will be a parent. At other times, and if space allows, we may allow one or two extra visitors. Preterm (premature) and sick babies are very sensitive to noise so please make sure that people talk quietly.
- We appreciate it may be difficult at times for parents to attend or be involved in their baby's care. In this situation you may wish to name an individual(s) to be there in your absence.

#### **Please Note:**

- **To reduce the risks of infection for your baby we would ask that anyone planning to visit who has signs of an infection, such as a cold, cough or tummy upset, or anyone who has been in contact with chicken pox, telephones the neonatal unit staff for advice before attending. For some infections, such as chicken pox, we may have to ask visitors to stay away until the infection has gone. In other cases we can offer advice to reduce the risk of passing the infection to your baby.**
- Apart from your baby's brothers and sisters, we will not allow children of primary school age or younger to visit.

## **Caring for your baby**

As parents we will encourage you to be involved in your baby's daily routine. Initially if your baby is very premature or unwell you may not be able to hold and cuddle them (we call this "minimal handling"), but we will show you other ways to be close to your baby. As your baby progresses and grows there will be increasing opportunities for you to hold and care for them; this will include "Kangaroo Care" which is holding your baby in skin to skin contact. Kangaroo care is beneficial to you and your baby's well being. Your baby's nurse will be able to guide you and your partner with this.

During "quiet time" we encourage practices that allow your baby to have rest and quiet. Parents are very welcome during these periods and quiet time is often a good time for babies to have kangaroo care, however:

- please talk quietly
- do not tap on incubator walls
- do not make phone calls using your mobile phones.
- If your baby is asleep when you arrive try not to disturb them and allow them to wake naturally.

If you, as a parent, have a minor infection, such as a cold, it may be best for your baby to keep visits short and handling to a minimum. Thorough attention to hand washing is always important but especially in this situation. Always contact the unit for advice before attending.

When your baby is receiving intensive or high dependency care we ask that only parents touch their baby. As the baby progresses and gets closer to going home, with your permission, other visitors may be able to touch or hold your baby.

## **In some circumstances we may ask you to leave the ward**

You and your baby have the right to confidentiality. Neonatal units embrace the principle of family centered care and encourage parents to be present during ward rounds and nursing handovers. However, during ward rounds and nursing handovers we may discuss sensitive issues. Therefore, we may, on occasion, ask you to leave the ward area when we are discussing other babies. We will try to keep these periods as short as possible.

Ward rounds are conducted according to the needs of patients, so it can be impossible to predict exactly when we will see your baby during the ward round. If you wish to be present for this, please discuss this with ward staff. We may also ask you to leave when certain clinical procedures are being carried out in your baby's ward area. This will include x-rays.

## **Receiving updates about your baby's care and progress**

- Each time you attend the unit the nurse who is caring for your baby will update you.
- The medical staff will meet you regularly to update you and involve you in decisions about your baby's care. As your baby progresses and matures these updates may happen less often. If you have not been updated recently or you have specific concerns, ask your baby's nurse to arrange for an opportunity to speak to the medical team.
- If you are unable to attend the unit, for whatever reason, please keep in touch by phone. Please note that information we give over the phone will be more limited than information we can give in face to face discussions. However, we can arrange to have detailed discussions by telephone if you are unable to attend.

## **Maintaining security and privacy for your baby and others**

- The wards have secure entry systems. Please try to be patient while we answer the entry buzzer. When asked please give your name and your baby's name (quite often the baby may not have the same name as one of their parents and this can be confusing for staff). The buzzer is always heard but staff may not answer immediately if they are busy with patients.
- Please do not let anyone else in unless they have identified themselves to staff.
- Please do not approach the cots of other babies unless invited to do so by parents.
- If you are taking photographs of your baby please do not include other babies, parents or staff members in the pictures without their permission.
- Please do not look at the charts or notes of other babies.



## **Contacting the Neonatal Unit**

- Ayrshire Maternity Unit, Crosshouse** - 01563 825366  
Intensive Therapy Unit
- 01563 825369  
High Dependency Unit
- 01563 825370  
Special Care Baby Unit
- Dumfries & Galloway Royal Infirmary** - 01387 241234
- Forth Valley Royal Hospital SCBU** - 01324 566788  
Special Care Baby Unit
- 01324 566790  
Intensive Therapy Unit
- Princess Royal Maternity, Glasgow** - 0141 211 5369  
Special Care Baby Unit
- 0141 211 5246  
Intensive Therapy Unit
- Neonatal Unit, Maternity Building  
Queen Elizabeth University Hospital,  
Glasgow** - 0141 201 2261 / 2339  
(Level 1)
- 0141 232 4334 / 4335  
(Level 2)
- Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley** - 0141 314 7035
- Wishaw General Hospital** - 01698 366820