



INFORMATION ABOUT CHANGES TO INFECTION PREVENTION PRACTICES IN THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

May 11, 2023

Dear NICU Families,

As you may be aware, following state guidance, Massachusetts hospitals including BIDMC will no longer be requiring universal masking as of Friday, May 12th. This includes staff, families, and visitors. As staff, we will continue to wear masks in some situations, such as when caring for patients with certain infections or when performing certain procedures. Although universal masking is no longer required, anyone can choose to wear a mask at any time, and we hope we all will respect each other's choices.

As we make this change, we would like to remind you of fundamental, everyday practices that can help limit risk of infection to you, to our staff, and most importantly to the babies in the NICU.

- **As always, hand cleaning is of the utmost importance.** Please thoroughly wash your hands with soap or use alcohol-based sanitizers (such as Purell or CalStat) often. This includes when you are entering and leaving the NICU, entering into your baby's room, and before and after every contact with your baby.
- **If you are sick, please do not come to the NICU.** If you are not feeling well or have symptoms of illness, please wait to come to the NICU until you are symptom free. If you have a fever, the fever should be gone for 24 hours before entering the NICU.
- **If you have COVID-19, please follow our policies for when you can enter the NICU.** Let a member of your care team know, and they can help guide you.
- **We want to support you being here as much as possible.** Two parents can be with their infant at any time. Other visitors must be accompanied by a parent. For children under 12, only children that are immediate family can come into the NICU, and these children will need to complete an infection screening questionnaire at each visit. At any one time, three people can be at the bedside for an infant.

We understand that having a baby in the NICU can be a very stressful time for families, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep everyone in the NICU safe. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact a member of your baby's health care team.

Sincerely,

Karen Waldo, MSN, RN
NICU Assistant Nursing Director