



Important Information For New NICU Parents



We know that having a baby in the NICU can be overwhelming. Over the next few days, you will receive a great deal of information about your baby's care. In the meantime, there are a few things that you can do to help us provide the best possible care for you and your newborn.

BreastMilk

If you plan to breastfeed or provide your baby with breast milk, it is important to begin producing milk as early as possible. We recommend a combination of hand expression and pumping to collect the thicker small amounts of colostrum for your baby within 6 hours after your baby's birth to help establish a milk supply. Ask your post-partum nurse for help with this.

Newborn Screening

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that all babies be tested for 30 rare but treatable diseases. Your baby's screening test (a filter paper with a blood sample) will be sent to the state laboratory in the first 48 hours of life. In addition to the standard tests performed on all babies, the state now conducts six newer optional tests (called pilot studies) on the same sample. Over the next two days, we will ask you for your consent for the pilot studies, which we strongly recommend. A booklet with more information on newborn screening is available in the information packet in your post-partum room.

Health Insurance for Your Baby

You will need to add your baby to your health insurance policy. You must do this within 30 days of your baby's birth, but we recommend you initiate enrollment within the first week of birth. You don't need to wait for the social security number or birth certificate to start the process. If you carry your insurance through your place of employment, contact the human resource department there. If you have *MassHealth* insurance, call the phone number on the back of your card (or you can call 1-800-322-1448). If you do not have insurance, or if you have any insurance-related questions, ask your nurse to contact a case manager to speak with you.

NICU Parent Identification Badges

You and your partner will receive a photo ID to allow secure entrance to the NICU; these badges should be worn whenever you are in the NICU. These badges are made from your driver's license or similar identification. Please bring the licenses for both partners to the Unit Coordinator at the NICU front desk and ask for the photo badges to be made.

Your badge will include a four digit identification code that you will need to use whenever you call the NICU for information. Because you don't yet have the badge, we have included the code(s) for your baby(ies) in the box below:

Identification Code(s) _____ _____

Attached is a helpful reference sheet that will help guide you through your first 24 hours as parents of a baby in the NICU and beyond. It answers many common questions. Don't hesitate to ask if you have any other questions or need additional information.