



# *A parent's guide to the Neonatal Unit*

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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

The Friends and Family Test - Please complete The Friends and Family Test to tell us about your experience at [www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily](http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily) or download our app to your smartphone from the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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# information

**Neonatal Unit  
01722 425180**

**Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust**

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to be returned prior to your baby being discharged. Please speak with nursing staff if you would like to hire a breast pump.

During your babies stay with us we will give you a Bliss pack with useful information and advice. The Bliss website [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk) has many useful articles and links on care of the sick or premature baby.

### Visiting times:

Parents and siblings are welcome on the unit at any time.

Other friends and family are welcome between 3-7pm, however due to infection risk no other children under 16 years are allowed on the unit. At times visiting may be restricted. Only 2 visitors at a time are allowed per cot with a parent present.

To ensure confidentiality of our babies, we request that you do not look at or touch other babies whilst their parents are not present and do not ask staff questions about them.

**To protect our babies all parents and visitors are asked to remove outside clothing and belongings. These are to be stored in the provided lockers. Please ensure to wash hands and use alcohol gel on entering and leaving the unit.**

**AND**

**Any person with a bad cough/cold or sickness should avoid coming onto the unit, If at all worried please see a member of staff.**

The doctors carry out a morning ward round and care decisions will usually be made at this point. Babies are weighed on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Once your baby is nearing discharge you may be asked to room in with your baby for at least 24 hours to establish feeding and get used to caring for your baby, the nurse looking after your baby will discuss this with you as appropriate.

## Parking

Parking tickets are available at a reduced weekly price which you are entitled to throughout your babies stay. Vouchers are also available to give parents discounted meals at the hospital cafes/restaurants. Please ask nursing staff for these.

## Facilities

The unit has family facilities available including refreshments, kitchen, Lounge and family room for relatives and friends to use whilst visiting you and your baby. Lockers are available to store belongings during visiting hours, they are £1 which is returnable.

Family accommodation is available for parents to stay allowing you to be near your baby without the need for travelling. Please speak to the nursing staff who will be happy to let you know about these facilities and arrange your stay.

Mobile Breast pumps can be hired out from the Neonatal unit. There is a fee for hire and a refundable deposit is also taken to ensure that the pumps are returned. These pumps are for use by mums who are expressing at home and need

# Welcome to the Neonatal Unit

## What the unit is for...

The neonatal unit specialises in the care of preterm babies and those who need additional nursing support following birth. We have 10 spaces available of which 3 are allocated to intensive care or high dependency care babies and another 10 available for those requiring special care. 4 rooms are now allocated for kangaroo care for mums preparing to go home with their baby.

Babies are admitted to the neonatal unit for many different reasons. Some may stay for one or two days while others for several months. No matter how short or long the stay is, a parent's worries and concerns are important to us and we will support and encourage you so that you are able to care for your baby.

Babies are usually first admitted into the intensive care room for initial assessment and monitoring. They will often be nursed in an incubator to help them maintain their temperature and so that we can closely monitor them. Your baby may be attached to monitors that will check their heart rate and oxygen levels and may also require other forms of monitoring, your nurse can explain these to you. The equipment and monitoring beeps to alert nursing staff of changes, try not to worry about these alarms as they quite often are set off by the baby wriggling.

At times babies may need to be transferred to a more specialised intensive care unit. An example of this may be if

they require surgery or ventilation support for over 48 hours.

We promote a philosophy of family-centred care, meaning that the neonatal team are here, not just for your baby, but also to support you by providing information, care and advice during this difficult time, and by working together with you to provide the best care for your baby. Mums will be asked to fill out questionnaires during your babies stay so we can check you are being fully supported during this stressful time.

The medical and nursing staff will keep you informed of the equipment in use, treatments, medications and plan of care for your baby. We encourage you to ask questions and voice any concerns, as we want you to feel confident and comfortable in the neonatal unit environment. We encourage you to get as involved in babies cares as possible. i.e. changing nappies, tube feeding, changing clothes, bathing.

## Kangaroo care

Kangaroo care also called skin to skin, is actively encouraged for babies on the Neonatal unit. This involves the baby being put onto your skin with just a nappy on and then being covered from behind with a blanket or cover. Placing your baby in Kangaroo care contact has a range of advantages for both you and your baby.

Kangaroo care has been shown to accelerate brain development and reduce crying and stress. It regulates



babies body temperature and improves the quality of their sleep. Kangaroo care also optimises digestion and has been shown to increase weight gain, furthermore, kangaroo care synchronises and normalises baby's heart rate and breathing rate and encourages breastfeeding behaviour.

For mums, kangaroo care has been shown to reduce the risk of postnatal depression as it promotes wellbeing and speeds recovery time and increases breast milk production.

Even those babies in incubators or receiving some levels of respiratory support can engage in this. It is recommended that babies have a minimum of 1 hours skin to skin contact at a time and this can be done as regularly as you wish.

Partners are also encouraged to participate in Kangaroo care as they wish and this benefits baby in the same way as skin to skin with mum. This encourages bonding and has been shown to create emotional wellbeing and calm as well as an increased confidence handling your new baby.

Please ask staff who will enable you to have kangaroo care with your baby and can show you how to do this on your own when appropriate. Specialised clothing is also available to enable you to move around with your baby during Kangaroo care. Please ask staff for details.

## What happens on the Unit?

There are lots of routine tests that babies may have whilst on the Neonatal Unit and these will be discussed with you by the medical or nursing team. Blood tests are common and are used to monitor your babies breathing effort, jaundice, fluid levels and other factors that may shape the way we care for your baby.