

**THE BIGGEST CARE FOR
THE SMALLEST PATIENTS.**



PEDIATRIC CARE ALLIANCE



**WELCOME TO THE CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S
NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT.**



TWO HEALTH LEADERS. ONE UNIQUE ICU.

Nobody's more important to your baby than you, and everything you do. But when your baby needs intensive care, all you want to know is that they have everything they need, from the best medical staff to the latest technology. That's why we're here — a powerful alliance of Connecticut's most respected healthcare providers, connecting you to an innovative Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and pediatric care.

Connecticut Children's is the only health system in Connecticut dedicated to children. We're known for our exceptional pediatric care and are ranked by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best children's hospitals in the nation. Hartford HealthCare is one of the state's largest, most integrated healthcare systems, bringing the world's most advanced care and procedures across Connecticut.

Together, we've come together to form a special alliance that means your baby has access to the most experienced specialists, the most sophisticated technologies and the most helpful resources and support systems available. So you always know we can do whatever it takes to help you and your child.



The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, or NICU, is designed to provide care for babies born prematurely or with health challenges. Connecticut Children's and Hartford HealthCare are collaborating to deliver the best care options for your child, including Level 4 NICU care — the highest possible level. Here are a few things you should know!

MEET YOUR TEAM.

Your baby's care team is made up of experienced Connecticut Children's specialists, with additional support and expertise from Hartford HealthCare. These are a few of the team members you may meet:

Neonatologists are the board-certified, attending physicians who oversee the team and your baby's care in the NICU.

Consulting Pediatric Specialists may be asked to join the team and provide expertise in a particular area, like pediatric cardiology.

Neonatal Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants have specialized training and knowledge in caring for babies and coordinating your baby's care.

Registered Nurses with special training in the care of babies in the NICU will work closely with you and deliver the care your baby's doctor orders. Connecticut Children's received Magnet designation — the gold standard in nursing excellence — an achievement earned by only 7% of the nation's hospitals.

Fellows and Residents are doctors who work on our care team while obtaining additional training in pediatrics and neonatology. We have students who are learning to care for infants as well.

Support Staff help both you and your baby in a variety of ways:

- Lactation Consultants
- Respiratory Therapists
- Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists
- Pharmacists
- Registered Dietitians
- Social Workers
- Psychologists
- Patient Care Assistants
- Health Unit Coordinators

CHECKING ON YOUR BABY.

It is perfectly natural to want to know how your baby is doing, day or night. Don't hesitate to ask questions of your doctor, nurse or support staff at any time. You can also:

Use our Angel Eyes app to see your baby through a live camera. (Angel Eyes may be briefly unavailable during care times.)

Use our Keriton app to track your milk production and supply.

Join us on "daily rounds" when your baby's care team meets to discuss his or her medical condition and the plan for care. You are encouraged to participate in this conversation as often as you can.

Call the NICU for updates, anytime. We will provide a security code you can use to confirm your identity. Please do not share this number.

WELCOMING FAMILY AND VISITORS.

We welcome family and visitors in the NICU, and it's extra important that we keep it safe. So please observe the following guidelines. Please note that only parents or designated guardians are allowed to receive information about their babies, and some NICU locations may have their own specific rules.

Visitor guidelines may be adjusted at any time in order to maximize safety for our infants. For current visitor guidelines specific to your location, please check with your baby's care team.

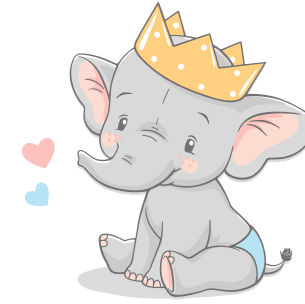
Health and safety are extremely important.

No one who is sick or who was recently sick will be allowed in the NICU. Sibling visits are restricted during cold and flu season. Parents and visitors are asked to "scrub in" with our special hand washing process before visiting their babies.



GET TO KNOW OUR NICU.

YOUR BABY'S NICU EXPERIENCE.



Of course, you want to know that your baby is safe, secure and comfortable at all times. Here are some of the ways we make sure that they're having the best possible experience with us.

PARENTAL PRESENCE.

You are the most important person(s) in your baby's life. Please be at your baby's bedside as often as you can. Ask the staff for assistance bringing your baby to your arms.

Parents are encouraged to read to their babies and to provide skin-to-skin care, also known as "kangaroo care." Research shows close contact with your baby provides many benefits. Your baby's care team can provide more information.

Parents are also encouraged to help with as much hands-on care as they are comfortable with, including changing diapers, taking temperatures, bathing, and other activities.

CARE & SLEEPING.

Every moment in the NICU is critical to your baby's health and development. Here are a few ways we nurture babies' growth:

We support your baby's care with the latest technology and equipment at every step of their experience.

We maximize sleep time by combining caregiving tasks during wakeful times.

Exposure to sounds, bright lights and other stressors are minimized as much as possible.

We provide nutrition based on your baby's needs — this may include receiving special IV fluid or feedings with a tube in the nose or mouth.

SECURITY.

The NICU is a locked unit. The only way to enter and leave is when a staff member unlocks the doors.

If your baby needs to leave the NICU for a test or procedure, they will be accompanied by NICU staff at all times.

Video cameras throughout the NICU allow us to keep an eye on activity and control access 24 hours a day.

Once your baby is ready to sleep in a crib, they may have an electronic security tag placed on their leg. If the tag is removed or your baby is moved through our doors, an alarm will sound throughout the NICU.

SAFETY.

Your baby has a bedside monitor that provides our team members with constant, real-time information about your baby's health. Some things to know about the monitor:

The screen and alarms are set for your baby's needs.

Different numbers provide different information, like heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate and how much oxygen is in your baby's blood.

Every baby is unique, so your baby's numbers will be different from others.

All NICU monitors are connected, so when your baby's nurse is away from the bedside, alarms will still be recognized.

"The APRNs and PAs that we worked with always visited with us and took the time to get to know our son. They reviewed all plans of care with us to ensure we knew what was going on and we agreed with their decisions. The doctors were amazing during our time in the NICU. They spoke to us and really took the time to understand our feelings and then explain why they were taking the steps that they planned with our son."

WHAT TO EXPECT: SHORTER STAYS.

Many babies are here in the NICU from a day to a week, until they're healthy enough to go home. While you're here, parents can expect the following to take place:

Consulting with your baby's nurse and other team members to learn about the types of care your baby will be receiving. Your nurse may assist you in activities like bathing, holding and feeding if needed.

Learning to care for yourself, so you're able to give your baby as much energy, attention and love as you can. Having a baby in the NICU can be very stressful, and special team members like psychologists and social workers are available to help you better understand and cope with these unusual circumstances.

Many opportunities to care for your baby, whether spending time reading or talking to them at their bedside or holding, feeding and bathing them. Every baby is different, and your nurse and care team will help you maximize your opportunities to support your baby.

Participating in family-centered rounds where you'll have the opportunity to meet with your baby's doctor and other team members at your baby's bedside to discuss their current status, plan of care and any questions you may have.

Accompanying your baby to tests and procedures that may be required. These may take place in the NICU, but if travel to another part of the hospital is needed, you are welcome to come with us.

Some waiting may be required, whether that means awaiting results or an opportunity to speak to a specialist about a particular concern. Please know that we understand how urgently you would like information about your baby and will do everything we can to provide it as quickly as possible!

Learning how to bring your baby home, with the help of our team, who will help you prepare for discharge. The staff will help you set up a feeding plan and sign up for infant safety classes.

WHAT TO EXPECT: LONGER STAYS.

It's not unusual for very sick or very small babies in the NICU to require stays of weeks or months. Our team is ready to help with the challenges of a longer hospitalization. In addition to the expectations that come with shorter stays (see the previous section), longer NICU stays can involve the following:

Changes in your baby's care and team. Over longer periods, it's common for the care your baby is receiving to change, along with the people providing it. Rest assured, the quality of the care will remain the highest.

Different rooms and areas of the NICU based on your baby's health conditions. Depending on the care your baby requires, their location may change.

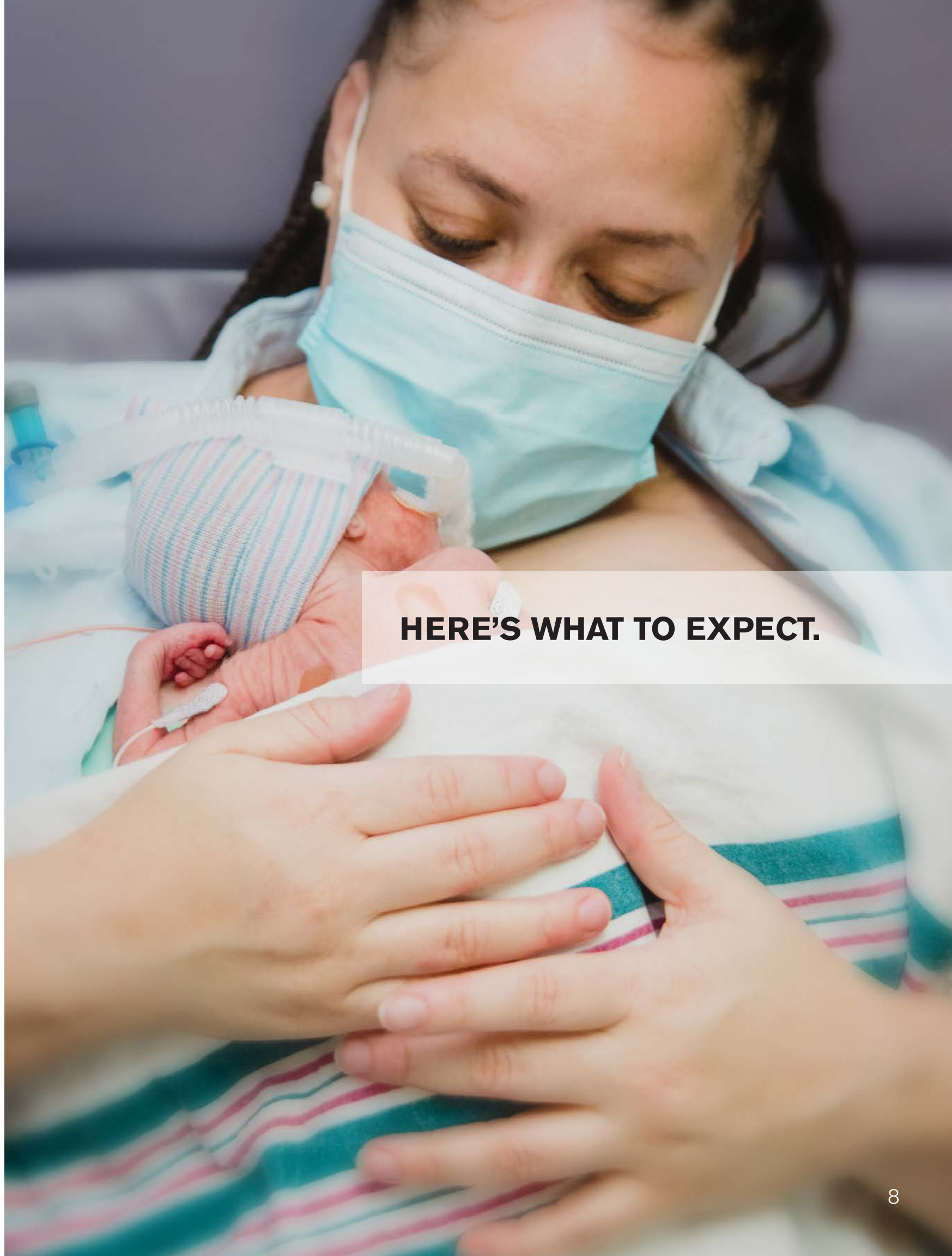
Learning more about long-term health conditions from specialists and other experts who can help you better understand and manage your baby's health and development.

Support groups and team members who can help you and your family members cope with the challenges of long-term NICU stays and any serious health conditions. Remember, there is no "normal" way to feel, and you are not alone!

Understanding nutrition with the help of Connecticut Children's pediatric registered dieticians (RD), who have special expertise in the nutrients needed for an infant's proper growth and development.

Discharge planning often includes a care coordinator who sets up medical appointments and arranges for supportive specialty services or equipment.

You can never expect the unexpected, but we can help you feel more supported and prepared for everything ahead — please don't hesitate to ask for any assistance.



HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT.



QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.



When you hear your baby is going to the NICU, you're going to have questions — lots of questions. And our staff is here to provide answers, so ask away, at any time. We can't cover everything you may want to know in these pages, but here are a few of the more common questions we encounter.

How can I help my baby? There are many ways you can help your baby in the NICU. These include making sure you're part of the "rounds" with your baby's care team, staying in communication with your baby's nurse and other caregivers, reading to your baby, and being involved with your baby's care, bathing and feeding. Your nurse will be happy to introduce you to the many ways you can be there for your baby.

How do I keep track of everything? You're going to have a lot of information and appointments coming your way. We have staff members who will help coordinate much of your baby's care, but we do recommend starting a file that will organize your paperwork and notes. And carry a notepad to jot down information and questions you want to remember to ask.

Do you offer religious services? Our chaplains are available for pastoral visitation, sacramental ministry and support. Chaplains are also able to connect you with a representative from your own faith group.

Why is my baby in an incubator, not a crib? It can be scary to see your baby in an incubator, but these simply keep your baby warm and cozy. Babies born prematurely do not always have enough fat on their bodies to keep them warm, so incubators help.

Why is my baby being moved? Usually, babies stay in the same area of the NICU, but sometimes they may need to be moved to other areas of the NICU or the hospital. You will always be notified of these moves in advance.

What if I'm feeling overwhelmed? If you're not sure how to feel, or feeling overwhelmed, that's perfectly normal. At times you may feel scared, or even angry. We have special members of our team ready to help and provide the support you need. Please ask your nurse or any staff member if you'd like to know more.

Where can I eat, park, stay, etc.? It's hard enough dealing with your baby's care without having to worry about the day-to-day details of spending so much time at the NICU. That's why you'll find helpful guides, lists and other resources in the back of this kit, with information about local places you should know.

"All members of our care team took the time to get to know our son and what his needs were. They treated him in a way that made him comfortable. They also took the time to get to know us. We were in the NICU for almost 3 months and the nurses, practitioners, doctors, and all other support members took the time to talk with us about not just our son but how we were feeling about things and gave us the opportunity to express any hesitations with our sons care."

UPDATED INFORMATION, JUST FOR YOU. As anyone in the NICU can tell you, things can change and evolve fast. So we've created this section for any and all information that is constantly updating, or unique to your baby — from details about your baby's care to the latest developments in terms of this hospital and the best places to eat, park and more.



THE ULTIMATE CHILDREN'S CARE TEAM. Connecticut Children's and Hartford HealthCare have partnered to create the Pediatric Care Alliance, a unique program that combines the specialized expertise of two powerful health systems and brings it to nearly 400 locations in the region. To learn more, visit ConnecticutChildrens.org/NICU.

"The nurses went above and beyond to make sure we always knew what was going on with our son and what they were doing to support him. They explained everything so we could understand and took the time to get to know our son. The lactation consultants stopped in each day to see if I needed any support on my breastfeeding and pumping journey. They were extremely helpful in recommending treatments as I suffered from mastitis, clogged ducts, yeast infection and a baby who was not completely ready to breastfeed."



**THE RIGHT RESOURCES
ARE READY AND WAITING.**



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