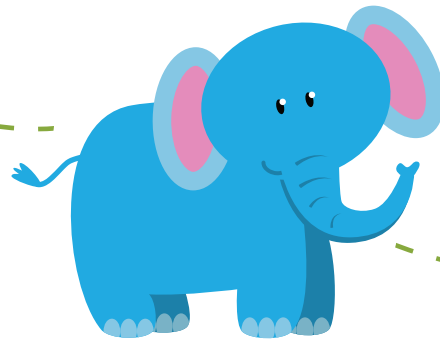


Developmental Care for the NICU



Developmental care is when we change your baby's surroundings (for example: noise, light and position) so they can grow and develop. An appropriate environment can help reduce stress, improve brain growth and promote sleep. In babies, stress from the environment can cause drops in oxygen, pauses in breathing (apnea), slow heart rates (bradycardia) and increased blood pressure. We want you – parents and caregivers – to help us provide the best NICU environment for your baby's development.

Sleep is very important. It impacts brain development and weight gain. We want your baby to complete a sleep cycle. This takes at least one hour. A baby's sleep cycle looks like this: Drowsy > Active Sleep > Quiet Sleep. Active Sleep is when your baby is asleep but may still move around, twitch, startle or suck on a pacifier. Quiet Sleep is when your baby is in a deeper sleep and is harder to wake up. Babies do the best healing and growing in Quiet Sleep.

SLEEP CYCLE = DROWSY > ACTIVE SLEEP > QUIET SLEEP

ACTIVITIES

You are the most important member of the caregiving team. Parenting in the NICU is different than parenting a well newborn, but being with your baby will help you learn. Our goal is to provide care when your baby is awake; we want to coordinate these "care times" with you. Life with a baby in the NICU is hard, and we know that your plans may change. Please let us know if you will be late or unable to make it to care times. Talking in a soft voice before gently touching or changing your baby's position prepares them for a change. During care times, try and hold your baby's arms or legs with your hands during position changes. Avoid sudden movements. Kangaroo care (skin-to-skin holding) is strongly encouraged once your baby is stable enough to hold. Ask your nurse if your baby is ready for kangaroo care.

NOISE

Talking should be in quiet voices or away from the bedside. Silence your cell phone. Doors and drawers should be open and shut as quietly as possible.

LIGHT

Shield your baby's eyes from lights before turning them on. The reason we use isolette covers is to shield the baby's eyes from continuous light exposure.

POSITIONING

Our goal is to help your baby stay in positions that are similar to what they would be in if they were still inside mom. Shoulders and hips should stay close to the body in a position we call "midline." When putting your baby in a new position, make sure there are no tubes or wires under them. Position your baby's hands so they are free to allow for self-consoling, grasping and putting hand to mouth. **Note:** If your baby has tubes in the mouth, hands should be secured so they can't pull them out. Nesting/ Boundaries are used until at least 34 weeks gestation or longer if your baby is unable to maintain proper position. These positioning aids are gradually removed as your baby is getting closer to discharge. Safe sleep is as easy as A, B, C: Alone, Back and Crib.