

Useful websites

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NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

DISCHARGE INFORMATION LEAFLET

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

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Family Care

Sunderland Royal Hospital

Contents

1. Introduction
2. When can I take my baby home?
3. Temperature
4. Feeding
5. Handling
6. Smoking
7. Hygiene
8. SIDS (cot death)

Signs that your baby may be unwell:

- Feverish, fretful.
- Change in feeding – usually becoming disinterested and reluctant to feed.
- Vomiting, especially when this has not been a particular problem before.
- Change in stools – loose, watery or explosive.
- Not responsive to you as usual and awakens less readily.
- Your baby may be more floppy than usual.
- Breathing may become more rapid or noisy.
- Paler than usual.
- Blotchy skin, rash that doesn't become lighter when a glass tumbler is pressed against it – this could be serious and you should get medical help urgently.

If your GP is not available you should take your baby to the nearest hospital emergency department.

- Bottle feeds should always be made up as needed.
- Do not reheat or reuse milk from an earlier feed, discard any remaining milk from an earlier feed.
- Of course if breast feeding, milk is prepared and sterilized by nature!

8. SIDS (cot death).

Like most parents you will be warned about the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The Department of Health guidelines suggest the following ways to reduce the risk of cot death:

- Place your baby on their back on a firm mattress to sleep.
- Do not put fluffy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows near the baby's face.
- Do not take the baby into your bed to sleep.
- Keep your baby's head uncovered and place your baby in the 'feet to foot' position (feet at the base of the cot).
- Use blankets and sheets instead of duvets until your baby is at least one year old and always check bedding does not cover their head.
- Keep the temperature of the room comfortably warm (an adult should feel comfortable in a short sleeved shirt), 65 degrees is about right, the room must never be too hot.
- Keep your baby in a smoke free environment, **exposure to second hand smoke doubles a baby's risk of cot death.**
- Babies should not be left in car seats to sleep, the car seats are to be used for travel purposes only.
- If your baby becomes unwell, seek medical advice promptly by phoning your GP or contact us at the Neonatal Unit. We are available 24 hours.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Tel: 0191 5699153

1. Introduction

We hope this information will be of some help to you when you take your baby home.

We know that taking a new baby home is an exciting time but can also be a time of uncertainty, use this leaflet as a reminder of some of the things you have already discussed with your named nurse. Should you have any other worries that are not mentioned in the leaflet, please telephone us on **0191 5699153**.

You must always use a suitable car seat even on the shortest journeys. If you do not own a car it is still advisable to borrow or hire a baby seat for getting your baby home from hospital by car/taxi etc.

2. When can I take my baby outside?

We suggest that you do not take your baby out before the date that they were due to be born. However, sometimes you may have to do this, as it is very important that your baby attends any appointments that are made for them.

3. Temperature

By the time your baby comes home they should be able to maintain a body temperature just as well as any other full term baby. The best temperature for your baby at home is around 65 degrees – too hot or too cold could be dangerous.

Make certain that your baby is dressed for the weather when going outside. On a cold day this means a hat, vest, babygro, cardigan, booties, mitts and several blankets. In very cold weather it is better if they are not outside for more than half an hour. Babies lose heat through their heads so it is very important that they wear a hat.

In warmer weather your baby will need less clothing, but a hat will be needed as protection from the sun. As a general guide, your baby should wear the equivalent of what you are wearing plus an extra layer.

Check the baby's temperature by feeling the back of the neck or stomach to see if they are too hot or cold. This is the baby's core temperature and the most accurate one, hands and feet should never be used to check a baby's temperature

4. Feeding.

Most babies will continue to feed as they did in the hospital. Unless we instruct you otherwise it is more natural to allow your baby to feed when they demand it, this is especially relevant for breast fed babies. However, we may ask you not to leave them for more than a certain period (4 hours) between feeds especially if your baby was born very early or is still very small.

If your baby is getting enough feed they will be satisfied after feeds, If they are always unsettled after feeds try giving them an extra ounce at each feed, when they drain that bottle add another ounce etc. For breast fed babies allow the baby to dictate the frequency of feeds they get. If you are worried about how much they are getting, write down the amounts and times of the feeds and discuss it with your health visitor.

Bottle feeds should always be made up as needed.

Some babies who were born very early or very small need high calorie milk. We will provide this milk on discharge then you can get it from your GP on prescription.

5. Handling.

Small babies spend a lot of time asleep and much of their growing takes place during sleep. The length of time a baby sleeps varies (15-20 hours per day), wakeful periods are not normal.

Take care not to tire your baby or disturb them unnecessarily, talk to your baby before a feed but after a feed let them rest. Cuddling your baby is normal and essential for a happy healthy relationship between you both. Do not allow visitors to handle your sleeping baby and it is especially important that they don't come near your baby if they are ill.

6. Smoking.

Smoking is bad for you and your baby's health. Passive smoking (breathing in other people's smoke) can irritate your baby's lungs. It is best if nobody smokes in the house, including visitors. Anyone who wishes to smoke should go outside.

A baby growing up in a smoky household is more likely to develop colds, bronchitis and other respiratory problems.

There is also an increased risk of cot death in households where people smoke, reduce the risk and do not take your baby into a smoky environment.

7. Hygiene.

You do not need to bath your baby every day, a simple top and tail can keep your baby clean. When you do bath your baby do it in a warm room, windows closed and have everything that you need (towel, soap, nappy and clothes) to hand and ask someone to help you until you are confident.

General daily hygiene rules are essential to reduce the risk of infection:

- Wash your hands before and after handling your baby.
- Use a separate towel, face cloth and soap for your baby.
- Always wash your hands and use liquid detergent and warm water to clean work surfaces before making up your baby's feed.
- Use an approved sterilising agent such as Milton to sterilize your bottles.