

# Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



Your baby may be delivered early or be born with problems. This is very hard on you and your baby's father.

You both may feel:

- Afraid
- Doubtful
- Blamable
- Lost and sad

This is a stressful time. You may get tense as the baby is quickly taken away for lifesaving procedures.

- You and your baby may be taken to a special area of the hospital to receive special care.
- Teams of nurses and doctors with special training take care of very sick babies in the NICU:
  - The baby is tested and watched very closely.
  - This may be very scary.
  - You may hear alarms and beeping and see lights flashing.
  - Wires may be attached to your baby and machines.
  - Parents may not be able to go into the NICU right away.
  - Team members will let you know how your baby is doing.
  - Parents are allowed to see, touch, and talk to their baby as soon as possible.
  - Ask the doctors and nurses questions if they use words you do not understand.
  - Make sure you get an update before you go to visit your baby so you know what to expect to see.
  - You will get to know the nurses and doctors who care for your baby.
  - You may want to keep a diary of what happens with your family in the NICU.

- The time you both spend with your baby touching, talking, and just being close is important for all 3 of you.
- If you are alone, ask a friend or family member to go in with you.
- Parents usually find it hard to see their baby the 1st time in the NICU.
- How you feel will depend on the following:
  - Did you know ahead of time that your baby would need special care after birth?
  - How is your baby doing?
  - How are you doing?
  - Have you ever been in a NICU before?
- Keep the phone numbers for the NICU handy.
- Call and ask about your baby's care at any time.
- Write down questions when you think of them.
- Keep a record of who speaks with you and what they said.