NICU Parent's Guide

Congratulations on the arrival of your new baby!

The experience of having your baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) may have its “ups and downs” and may take some time to get used to. The number of babies, rows of beds, maze of medical equipment and the constant noise of monitors can be overwhelming.

Remember, even though your newborn is in the hospital and cared for by others, this is your baby and we welcome your involvement and participation in the care.

Common questions to ask the nursing staff include:

- How do I get information about my baby?
- When can I visit?
- Can siblings or other guests visit?
- What guidelines should I follow to help keep the NICU healthy?
- Are there support groups or resources on campus?

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Table of Contents

PARENTS AND THE NICU ........................................... 2
VISITORS IN THE NICU ........................................... 3
WHO IS CARING FOR MY BABY? ............................... 4
NICU EQUIPMENT .................................................... 6
BREASTFEEDING IN THE NICU ................................. 8
BONDING WITH YOUR BABY ..................................... 9
PEEK-A-BOO™ NEONATAL ICU WEB CAM .................. 10
SUPPORT FOR PARENTS ............................................ 11
HELPFUL HOSPITAL INFORMATION .......................... 12
GETTING READY TO GO HOME ............................... 13
REQUESTING A BIRTH CERTIFICATE ............................ 14
HELPFUL RESOURCES ............................................ 15
NOTES ................................................................ 16

The information contained herein is provided for educational and informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice and treatment or consultation with qualified physicians and other health care professionals regarding your individual needs. The March of Dimes is not engaged in rendering medical advice or recommendations. Some of the information provided herein was written by individual health care providers and may not represent the views or opinions of the March of Dimes.
PARENTS AND THE NICU
The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit encourages you to spend time with your baby as often as possible. You are considered part of the care team.

When can I visit the NICU?
The NICU welcomes parents 24 hours a day.

What is needed for me to enter the NICU?
You will need to show your baby’s birth ID band and your driver’s license.

When can I be with my baby?
You are encouraged to spend as much time as you can with your baby. This time will give you a better understanding of your baby’s needs.

What if I have the sniffles?
If you or your guests have the sniffles or allergy type symptoms, they can actually be a viral infection. If this is the case, please stay home and take care of yourself. Babies in the NICU can get sick very easily, and the staff wants to protect them from infections. If you have concerns or questions, feel free to talk to your baby’s nurse.

How do I get information about my baby?
The NICU can be a very overwhelming place for families - so ask questions. The staff makes every effort to keep you updated on the condition of your baby. Health information about your baby is only shared with parents. Please refer questions about your baby’s care to the attending physician, nurse, nurse practitioner or respiratory therapist.

How do I call for condition updates from home?
You can call 24 hours a day. The main NICU number is 972-981-7611. You will be connected to your baby’s nurse.

May I use my cell phone or laptop computer in the NICU?
Electronic devices are allowed, but they must be wiped down with an approved hospital disinfectant wipe.
VISITORS IN THE NICU
The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit realizes you may want additional people to offer support during your stay. Please review the following guidelines to help keep your infant safe.

Who can visit my baby?
After arriving at the NICU, you will be asked to select up to 4 additional individuals who will be allowed to visit your infant throughout their stay. No other visitors other than these 4 individuals and the parents will be allowed to visit the baby. Only four individuals may be at an infant’s bedside at any one time. If you have additional questions, feel free to ask your baby’s nurse.

How many people can visit at a time?
Only four individuals may be at an infant’s bedside at any one time.

When can guests visit my baby?
Guests may visit after 24 hours of admission. Visitors may visit at any time with the parents, except from 6:30-7:30 a.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Can siblings visit?
Yes. Big brothers and big sisters are encouraged to visit, except during RSV and flu season. Ask your baby’s nurse for more information.

Health Checks for Visitors and Siblings
Whenever anyone visits your child, they will be asked a few questions about their health and we will take their temperature to make sure they do not have a fever. Additionally, immunization records for children under the age of 16 will be reviewed and need to be placed on file prior to their first visit.
WHO IS CARING FOR MY BABY?

Although you may be afraid to be away from your baby, know that your baby/babies are in good hands with the compassionate team that will support you and your family during your baby’s stay in the NICU. The team, comprised of physicians on the medical staff and nurses are committed to working closely with you to develop a care plan for your baby. You are likely to meet most of these healthcare professionals during your baby’s stay in the NICU.

**Neonatologists** are pediatric doctors on the medical staff specifically trained to care for sick and premature newborns in a hospital setting. There are a number of neonatologists who rotate through the NICU. They will manage the care until your baby is discharged. A neonatologist is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**NICU Nurses** provide 24-hour bedside care throughout your baby’s hospitalization. These nurses are experienced and have received extensive training to work with sick babies. They are the persons with whom you will have the most contact and the greatest opportunity to discuss your baby’s treatment and progress.

**Neonatal Nurse Practitioners** are registered nurses who have advanced education and specialized training in working with sick and premature babies. They work under the direction of the neonatologist, can perform many procedures and help direct your baby’s care.

**Respiratory Therapists** in the NICU are trained to take care of babies with breathing problems. It is especially important for them to care for babies in the NICU because premature babies’ lungs are not fully developed. They also provide care to babies that require medical equipment to help them breathe.

**Lactation Consultants** are health care professionals who are experienced in teaching you how to breastfeed your baby. The lactation consultant’s primary role is to provide you with education, assistance and support while you gain confidence in breastfeeding your baby.

**PACT (Palliative Care Team)** is an interdisciplinary team to support your family should your baby have complex medical needs. The team assists in planning and care coordination. Please ask your physician or nurse.

**Care Transition Managers** are nurses or social workers who will meet with you to provide assistance, support and referrals for dealing with the stress of having a baby in the NICU. The social worker can also assist you with any financial, emotional or family concerns. For issues of lodging and transportation, the social worker can act as a referral for you while your baby is in the NICU.

**Physical Therapists** in the NICU develop and implement plans to promote optimal long-term developmental outcomes and prevent complications from prematurity. They have an understanding of preterm and infant development and behavior and work in conjunction with other therapy disciplines. They work to improve motor skills, proper movement patterns and sensory responses, and provide positioning to support alignment, handling to support developmental and daily activities, range of motion exercises, splinting if necessary to manage atypical postures or tone, oral-motor intervention in preparation for oral feeding and work with parents and
families to educate and help them understand their baby’s behaviors.

**Occupational Therapists** focus on providing appropriate developmental care such as positioning to help babies remain in a calm state, providing gentle range-of-motion, touch and vestibular input, as well as parent education. They are trained to assist with feeding difficulties that develop. They also provide early intervention for infants who have special needs such as Down’s syndrome, spina bifida, or other diagnoses that can cause infants to have developmental delays.

**Registered Dieticians** monitor what your baby is fed and how well they are growing. These dieticians are trained in infant nutrition, including human milk, vitamin and mineral supplements, and infant formulas. At the time of discharge, they will assist the physician and nurses in helping you provide the appropriate diet to meet your baby’s nutritional needs.

**Chaplains** are available to meet with you to offer spiritual and emotional support. Although a chaplain is trained to work with people of all faiths, you may wish to have the chaplain facilitate a visit from a minister of your own tradition. The chaplain is also a resource person who can work with you as you consider baptism, anointing or other spiritual services.

**NICU Peer Parents** are Texas Health Plano volunteers who were previously NICU parents. These special volunteers can provide support as needed.
NICU EQUIPMENT

Perhaps the most intimidating part of having a baby in the NICU is all of the unfamiliar equipment and procedures in the neonatal intensive care unit. Although at times it may be overwhelming, remember the equipment is there to help your baby get well.

### Monitoring Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Equipment</th>
<th>What It Looks Like</th>
<th>What It Is Doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiac Monitor</td>
<td>Stickers on the chest connected to wires</td>
<td>Monitors the speed and rhythm of the heart beat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Monitor</td>
<td>Stickers on the chest connected to wires</td>
<td>Monitors breathing rate and pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse oximeter</td>
<td>Wrap around a wrist or foot and has a red light</td>
<td>Monitors the amount of oxygen in the blood.</td>
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### IV Equipment

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<th>Type of Equipment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral IVs</td>
<td>Tubes running from the feet, hands, arms or scalps that may connect to a bag of fluid</td>
<td>Delivers medications or fluids directly into the veins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICC/Central Lines</td>
<td>Tubes inserted into an arm, a leg, the neck or groin</td>
<td>Are longer catheters, or tubes, than regular IVs, and travel through the vein into the large veins that empty into the heart. This is common procedure for NICU babies. The tubes are inserted by specially trained nurses in the unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbilical Catheters</td>
<td>A tube inserted into the umbilical cord</td>
<td>Allow fluid and medication administrations, blood pressure monitoring, painless blood sampling, and other procedures. A tube is inserted in the umbilical cord stump and travels to the large veins and arteries near the heart. Umbilical lines can be inserted into an artery in the umbilical cord, a vein in the umbilical cord, or both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral Arterial Lines (PAL)</td>
<td>A small IV catheter inserted into a peripheral artery</td>
<td>Used to monitor blood pressure and obtain blood specimens.</td>
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### Respiratory Equipment

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<tr>
<td>Nasal Cannulas</td>
<td>Set of small nasal prongs</td>
<td>Delivers a higher concentration of oxygen than room air and provide air at a higher flow to keep airways open and encourage babies to breathe on their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure)</td>
<td>A mask or a special set of nasal prongs placed firmly on baby’s nose</td>
<td>Provides constant pressure to encourage open airways and remind babies to breathe. Higher concentrations of oxygen may be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventilators</td>
<td>A special tube placed in the airway through the mouth or the nose.</td>
<td>Delivers breaths to babies who cannot breathe on their own or who don’t breathe well. When a baby is put on a ventilator with a breathing tube, the procedure is called intubation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Other Equipment

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<th>What It Is Doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeding Tubes</td>
<td>A feeding tube travels from the mouth or the nose to the stomach.</td>
<td>Infants who are too sick or weak to eat from the breast or from a bottle receive food through these tubes. Inserting the tubes and giving feedings through them are common procedures among premature babies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolettes</td>
<td>Plexiglas bed</td>
<td>This box is an incubator that protects the baby from temperature fluctuations in the room and adjusts to the baby’s unique needs. It has portholes on the sides for medical staff to reach through in order to provide different treatments, diaper changes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phototherapy or Bili Lights</td>
<td>A bright white or blue light shining onto the baby</td>
<td>Preemies are more likely to have problems from jaundice. Phototherapy lights, also called bili lights, are special lights that help the baby’s body break down bilirubin, the chemical that causes jaundice.</td>
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</table>
BREASTFEEDING IN THE NICU
Providing for your baby’s nutrition is very important but breastfeeding in the NICU can be challenging. Whether you are pumping or breastfeeding directly, the NICU staff wants to support you. Any amount of milk you can provide is a huge benefit to your baby.

Breastfeeding Support
Certified lactation consultants work in the NICU and are available to provide individual breastfeeding education and help. NICU employees will encourage you to begin breastfeeding as soon as your baby is ready. You may practice this at your baby’s bedside. Ask your baby’s nurse or a lactation consultant for assistance.

Request a Pumping Kit
A pumping kit is available that includes the equipment necessary to use the hospital’s breast pumps. If you have not received a kit, please ask your baby’s nurse or the lactation consultant.

Where can I pump?
Private rooms in the NICU are available specifically for pumping your milk. The rooms have hospital-grade breast pumps and special supplies, such as collection bottles available for your convenience. You may also pump at your baby’s bedside if you request, which may help increase the amount of milk you make. There are privacy curtains at every bedside. Please ask your baby’s nurse to assist you.

Storing Milk at the NICU
The NICU can keep some of your frozen breast milk on hand as space allows. You will need to store the rest at home. Staff will let you know when they are running low on your milk.

Bringing Your Milk to the NICU
If you are pumping at home and bringing milk to the NICU, please carry it in an insulated bag or on ice. If it is frozen, we want it to remain frozen during transport.

Nuzzling
If your baby is stable enough, but too small to breastfeed, you can still practice skin to skin contact. Ask your baby’s nurse about nuzzling.

Online Breastfeeding Education
For more information, request a NICU specific breastfeeding guide from a lactation consultant. You can also visit TexasHealth.org/ebreastfeeding for more support on breastfeeding. Enter code THRBABY to access the eBreastfeeding course.

Renting or Purchasing Breast Pumps or Supplies
Check with your insurance company, as many will cover these costs. Ask a lactation consultant for more information.

Outpatient Lactation Appointments
After you and your baby have left the hospital, Texas Health Plano offers outpatient lactation appointments in A Mother’s Gift shop located on the 3rd floor of Tower B. For more information, ask your lactation consultant.

Outpatient Bilirubin Clinic
Babies who are under 5 days old at discharge may have a follow-up infant visit for a jaundice check in A Mother’s Gift located on the 3rd floor of Tower B.
BONDING WITH YOUR BABY

You may find that after your baby is admitted, you may have difficulty knowing what you can and cannot do with your baby. The nurse and doctor are the best people to tell you what your baby can tolerate. However, listed below are some simple things that you can do to bond with your baby.

Visit Often And Participate

By visiting regularly, you will learn what your baby likes and doesn’t like. Read, sing and talk to your baby. Your baby will quickly learn your smell and voice. Also feel free to assist with changing diapers, bathing, dressing, feeding, calming, talking to and holding your baby. Find out from your nurse when these activities happen so you can be available to participate and learn.

Touching and Holding

At first, touching may be too stimulating for your baby. Babies are comforted by your firm, steady touch. If your baby is very small, you can offer your finger for them to grasp or by placing their hand in yours. Remember a little goes a long way.

Sleep

Sleep is the time your baby grows. You can help your baby get good sleep by using a soft voice, keeping the lights low, and letting your baby sleep between feeding times.

Skin-to-Skin (Kangaroo Care)

Holding your diapered baby on your bare chest, skin-to-skin is an important way for moms and dads to be close to their baby. It helps regulate your baby’s breathing, helps keep your baby calm and relaxed, and helps the mother increase the amount of milk that she produces. You can change into a hospital gown or wear a button-down shirt to make Kangaroo Care (skin-to-skin) easier. You should plan on allowing at least an hour to hold your baby skin-to-skin.

Bring Clothes

If your baby is able to wear clothes, bring whatever baby clothes you wish. Remember to write your baby’s name on the clothes and wash the clothes with baby or unscented detergent. Avoid white clothing as they can easily get mixed in with hospital linens. Please leave your heirloom pieces at home. If your baby is born premature, don’t purchase a large quantity of preemie clothes. Your baby will outgrow them quickly.

Scent Cloths

The NICU provides a small cloth for you to keep by your baby when you are away. Smelling your scent helps comfort the baby when you are unable to be in the NICU.
PEEK-A-BOO℠ NEONATAL ICU WEB CAM

The Peek-a-Boo℠ service at Texas Health Resources hospitals allows parents and designated family members and friends to view real-time video while your baby is a patient in the NICU. This service is offered free of charge and may be available to you during your stay. Thanks to the philanthropic support of one of our grateful patients, we are able to provide the cameras for our patients and their families.

To login to see your newborn, go to TexasHealth.org/CribCam

Who can view the babies?
Only people with authorized access such as the parent, family members and NICU employees can view the video. Your baby can only be viewed over the Internet by you and the family and friends you allow to access the service.

How many user/family accounts can I create?
The baby’s parent has the ability to create 25 family and friend user accounts.

Do all the users have the ability to speak or sing to my baby?
No, only the parent’s account has the ability to use one-way audio.

Will the video be on all the time while my baby is in the NICU?
No, a baby’s video could be off for a variety of reasons. It can be difficult to stream video during staff interactions with your baby, and there will be times when NICU staff turns the camera off. When this occurs, you will see the message: “The video system is currently offline. Please try back again later.” If your video remains offline for an extended period of time, please feel free to contact our nursery.

Who do I call if I am experiencing technical difficulties with the Peek-a-BooSM service?
If you are experiencing technical difficulties accessing the webcam service, please call 972-981-7611.
SUPPORT FOR PARENTS
The NICU journey can be both a physically and emotionally taxing experience for a parent. The emotions of a NICU parent can include sorrow, guilt, anger and regret. Love and joy are there too but sometimes the stress and pain that a parent can experience during the NICU journey can overpower even the strongest and bravest parents. Basically, your baby’s medically challenging days will be your bad days and your baby’s healthy days are your good days.

Are there any support groups that are available for me?
A Parent Craft Lunch is held monthly. This is a time for parents to mingle with other parents experiencing the same celebrations and frustrations and share their experiences. The upcoming date for the lunch will be posted in the unit. Texas Health Plano also offers March of Dimes print and web parent support, which will be introduced to you shortly after admission.

Tips for Coping with a NICU Stay
The following tips can help you deal with your baby’s up and downs.
- Take care of yourself. Vent your frustrations to a friend, the social worker, the chaplain or a counselor. Your health is extremely important for you and your baby.
- Celebrate when you can. But also, give yourself permission to cry and feel overwhelmed. Try not to compare your baby’s situation with others. Your baby is a unique little person.
- Connect with other NICU parents. Meeting other parents in a similar situation can be very helpful.
- Keep a journal. Writing or typing about your NICU journey as it happens can be very therapeutic.
- Accept the support. Even when they just don’t seem to understand how you feel.
- Take notes. It’s easy to get overwhelmed. Be prepared to ask questions.
- Take pictures of your baby. You can leave a disposable camera at the bedside for those special times.
- Take the opportunity to make memories. Have your baby’s footprints taken as soon as your baby is stable enough. Ask your nurse to help with this beautiful keepsake.

When to Seek Professional Counseling
You may benefit from seeing a professional counselor if:
- You think it may help you feel better.
- Your ability to cope with the situation is not improving and you feel stuck.
- You continue to find no joy in other parts of your life.
- You have relationship troubles with your partner or others close to you.

It is important to speak with a professional counselor if:
- You feel prolonged numbness or detachment.
- You continue to feel detached from your baby.
- You have trouble getting out of bed or starting your day.
- You feel unable to cope or manage your other responsibilities.
- You think about harming yourself or others.

Your doctor or the hospital social worker can help you figure out if counseling would be right for you as well as help you find a qualified counselor in your community.
HELPFUL HOSPITAL INFORMATION

Internet Access
The hospital offers free wireless to its visitors and guests. To join, select the network THR-Guest. You will be prompted to agree to our terms of use.

Forgot Something?
Texas Health Plano has two gift shops. The first floor of the Main building has a gift shop with standard gifts, flowers and snacks. On the 3rd floor of Tower B, in the Labor & Delivery waiting area, A Mother’s Gift is a lactation resource center and gift shop that provides new mother and infant gifts, as well as breastfeeding supplies, pump rentals and outpatient lactation consults.

Spiritual Support and Chaplains
The Hope Chapel is located in the main lobby to the left of the Tower A elevators.

The Pastoral Care Department can be reached by calling 972-981-8439 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To reach a chaplain during the evenings or on weekends, call 972-981-8114 and ask that the chaplain on call be paged. A chaplain is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

On-campus Dining Options
Texas Health Plano has several on campus dining options. For specific operating hours, ask the NICU front desk staff.

Atrium Café
Located on the lower level of Tower A. When you exit the elevators turn left, and then take an immediate right. It offers grilled items, a deli and a salad bar.

Healing Grounds Café
Located in the Main lobby. The café offers grab-and-go meals, pastries, panini’s, pizzas, drinks and snacks.

Vending machines are located throughout the hospital for your convenience.

Lodging and Dining Suggestions
For suggestions on nearby hotels or restaurants, feel free to ask the NICU front desk staff.
GETTING READY TO GO HOME

We know how exciting and scary it can be when you learn from the doctor and nurses that your baby will be ready to go home soon. Along the way, your baby’s doctors and nurses have been slowly preparing you through teaching and support so that you can become comfortable taking your baby home. Typically, your baby has to be able to eat well, maintain weight, stay warm and breathe independently.

In preparation for going home, consider the following:

CPR for NICU Families
Infant CPR is available at Texas Health Plano. A schedule of classes is posted at the NICU front desk. Speak with the NICU front desk staff for more information.

Learning to Use Equipment
Some babies require special equipment when they go home. Common equipment includes an apnea monitor or home oxygen. The medical equipment company will provide the training prior to your baby leaving the hospital. The care transition manager will coordinate the teaching with you and the equipment company. Consider buying baby clothes that can fit comfortably with any equipment that your baby may be using.

Baby’s Space at Home
Talk with your nurse about preparing a place for your baby at home. Some typical baby shower gifts are not safe for a premature baby. Ask your nurse before you buy some of these items. Items to avoid include:

- Extra padding or inserts for your baby’s car seat
- Cushions that are sold to help keep your baby in a certain position in bed
- Bumper pads for the baby’s crib at home
- Home monitors that promise to reduce the risk of SIDS
- A large number of the same kind of bottle or nipple. Your baby may not eat well from a particular bottle or nipple style at home.

Car Seat Test
Babies typically have a car seat test prior to going home. This test is done to make sure that your baby breathes well while sitting in the car seat for a period of time. Should you have any questions about car seat safety or would like to have some help with the installation of the car seat, please speak with your baby’s nurse about whether this test is ordered by your baby’s doctor. Additionally, Texas Health Plano offers car seat safety checks. To schedule an appointment, call 1-877-THR-Well.

Discharge Paperwork and Medical Records
You should receive a copy of the baby’s discharge summary when your baby leaves the NICU. Make sure to keep the discharge summary in your diaper bag so that you have it at all doctor’s appointments. If you would like a copy of your baby’s medical record, contact the Health Information Services Department online at TexasHealth.org/MedicalRecords.

Prescriptions
Prescriptions are often given to parents for their baby’s special needs. The parent is instructed to fill the prescription before the baby can be discharged home. Your NICU nurses will review any special instructions with you prior to discharge. If you prefer, you may fill your prescriptions at The Texas Health Prescription Shop, an independent pharmacy, located in Tower A on the first floor. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and are closed most major holidays. The phone number is 972-981-8085.
REQUESTING A BIRTH CERTIFICATE
As a new parent, you might feel overwhelmed by the amount of information that seems to come with your baby. And the last thing you might be thinking about is your baby’s birth certificate. Below are the office locations where birth certificates can be obtained.

Born at Texas Health Allen
Collin County Clerk
200 South McDonald Street, Suite 120
McKinney, TX 75069
972-548-4153

Born at Texas Health Dallas
Dallas County Clerk
509 Main Street, Records Building
Dallas, TX 75202
214-653-7131

Born at Texas Health Kaufman
Kaufman County Clerk
100 West Mulberry Street
Kaufman, TX 75142
972-932-4331

Born at Texas Health Alliance
Tarrant County Clerk
200 Taylor Street, Suite 301
Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-884-1550

Born at Texas Health Denton
Denton County Clerk
1450 E. McKinney St.
Denton, TX 76209-4524
940-349-2012

Born at Texas Health Plano
Collin County Clerk
200 South McDonald, Suite 120
McKinney, TX 75069
972-548-4153

Born at Texas Health Arlington
City of Arlington Vital Records
201 E. Abram, Suite 720
P.O. Box 90231
Mail Stop No. 63-0700
Arlington, TX 76004-3231
817-459-6777

Born at Texas Health Fort Worth
Tarrant County Clerk
200 Taylor Street, Suite 301
Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-884-1550

Born at Texas Health SouthWest Fort Worth
Tarrant County Clerk
200 Taylor Street, Suite 301
Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-884-1550

Born at Texas Health HEB
Bureau of Vital Statistics for the City of Bedford
2000 Forest Ridge Drive
Bedford, TX 76021
817-952-2112

Born at Texas Health Stephenville
Erath County Clerk
100 West Washington Street
Stephenville, TX 76401
254-965-1482

Texas Department of Health Vital Statistics Division
On file at this location at least three months after birth for all births in the State of Texas.
1100 W. 49th St.
Austin, TX 78756
512-458-7111

SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS Parents may request a Social Security number for their newborn at the time of birth. The Social Security Administration will assign your newborn a number and mail the card directly to you. For additional information regarding Social Security cards, please visit socialsecurity.gov or call 1-800-772-1213.
# HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are some websites that can help you during your NICU stay.

## NICU Experience Support

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March of Dimes</td>
<td>The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. The website has a wealth of information on a variety of topics including prenatal care and information about the NICU. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.marchofdimes.com/nicu">www.marchofdimes.com/nicu</a> or <a href="http://www.nacersano.org">www.nacersano.org</a> (Spanish site).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>This is a March of Dimes online community especially for NICU families. Participate in online discussions, start a blog, or just make friends. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.shareyourstory.org">www.shareyourstory.org</a> or <a href="http://www.compartasuhistoria.org">www.compartasuhistoria.org</a> (Spanish site).</td>
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## Social Services

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<td>2-1-1 Texas</td>
<td>The 2-1-1 helpline in North Texas maintains a list of community services providing assistance with health care, employment, education, housing, counseling, transportation needs, and much more. This service is available 24 hours a day and has multilingual staff. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.211northtexas.org">www.211northtexas.org</a> or call 2-1-1 (or toll free 1-877-541-7905) or TTY 1-877-833-4211.</td>
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<th>Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>SSI/Medicaid Program</td>
<td>Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides financial assistance for NICU medical expenses. Eligibility for this assistance program is determined by a baby's birth weight rather than by income while the baby in the hospital. You must apply for this program shortly after your baby is born, so be sure to ask your social worker or case manager for assistance with your application. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.ssa.gov">www.ssa.gov</a>.</td>
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<td>Medical Transportation Program</td>
<td>Medicaid recipients can use this program to request transportation to the doctor or a hospital in another city (including the hospital to visit your baby). It can help pay for travel and meals in some cases, for example, if you must stay away from home overnight or longer for medical reasons. If you have any questions about this program you can ask your social worker. <strong>DFW area residents call 1-855-687-3255 or MTP at 1-877-MED-TRIP (1-877-633-8747).</strong></td>
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<td>WIC (Women, Infants and Children)</td>
<td>WIC provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care for low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5. Even if you have been denied Medicaid for financial reasons, you might still qualify for WIC. WIC is also able to loan a breast pump if you are returning to work or school. If you need a breast pump, please ask for one of the WIC offices that serves your community. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd">www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd</a> or call 1-800-942-3678.</td>
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