Special Care for Special Babies
A Guide to the NICU
Welcome

All parents hope their babies will be born healthy. Some babies, though, are born too soon and need special care. Others are born on time but have medical conditions that require extra support.

The newborn intensive care unit (NICU) at the Children’s Hospital at Providence is perfectly suited to meet the needs of these special babies. This is the only level III NICU in Alaska, and we serve all Alaskans.

We’re committed to caring for you as well as for your baby. Having a baby in the NICU can be very stressful. Here you will receive compassionate support while your baby gets high-level medical care.

Expert care you can trust

Every day, around the clock, our team of specialists provides care for Alaska’s most critical newborn infants. Our staff is always ready to care for your baby and you.

Here are some of our team members you may meet:

• **Neonatologist**: A doctor who specializes in newborn intensive care, heads the NICU medical team, and is available 24/7

• **Neonatal nurse practitioner**: A nurse with advanced education who works alongside the neonatologist and nurses and is responsible for planning and directing the care of your baby

• **Clinical nurse specialist**: A nurse who has advanced training and serves as an expert for other nurses

• **Nurse**: The registered nurse specifically assigned to care for your baby during a shift

• **Respiratory therapist**: A specialist who monitors your baby’s breathing and, if necessary, uses oxygen, etc., to treat breathing problems

• **Dietitian**: A dietary expert who makes sure your baby gets the nutrition needed for growth and healing

• **Physical, occupational and speech therapists**: Health care professionals who help with your baby’s physical development and feeding behaviors

• **Lactation consultant**: A specially trained caregiver who can help a mother supply breast milk to her baby even if the baby is too tiny or weak to breastfeed

• **Breastfeeding peer counselors**: Graduate NICU mothers who have been trained in breastfeeding and peer counseling to offer one-on-one or group breastfeeding support

• **Chaplain**: A clergy member (e.g., priest, minister, pastor, rabbi) who can provide spiritual support, regardless of your religious beliefs or faith background

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Expert care you can trust (continued)

- **Social worker/case manager:** A licensed professional who can connect you with local resources, assist with financial and legal concerns, and help with discharge planning.

- **Parent navigator:** A former NICU parent who provides one-on-one support and understanding, advocacy for NICU families, and organization of family support activities and NICU tours.

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Staying in touch

It’s very difficult for families to be separated from their babies. If you’re unable to be with your baby, you can still be involved in your baby’s care:

- **Provide breast milk for your baby.** If you plan to breastfeed, you will want to begin pumping your breasts as soon as possible. You should try to pump every three hours. Talk with a lactation consultant about pumping and storing your milk.

- **Call us for information 24/7.** Your baby’s nurse will be happy to tell you how your baby is doing and answer your questions. If you call during shift change, you may be asked to leave a message because during this time nurses are focused on exchanging important information about your baby. Please limit calls between 6:30 – 8 a.m. and 6:30 – 8 p.m. if possible.

- **Ask us for help.** Our large supportive staff includes social workers, chaplains, lactation consultants and financial counselors – all of whom are here for you. Please let us know how we can help.

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A healing environment for your baby

Our 66-bed NICU is an extraordinary healing environment for tiny, premature and medically fragile babies.

We care for:

- Babies born as early as 22 weeks gestation
- Babies born with infections
- Babies born with disorders, such as spina bifida, bowel conditions or heart defects
- Babies who are stressed during birth and need special attention
Getting here

Transporting your baby
If you live outside the Anchorage area, your health care provider may call us to transport your baby to the Children’s Hospital at Providence. We may use a jet, helicopter or ambulance, depending on your location.

Our transport team includes neonatal nurse practitioners and certified NICU nurses. They are specially trained to care for medically fragile newborns as they are moved from one location to another.

If you fly to Anchorage:
From Ted Stevens International Airport, you can easily reach Providence Alaska Medical Center and the Children’s Hospital at Providence by renting a car or taking a cab.

If you drive to Anchorage:
From the south:
1. From New Seward Highway, turn right onto 36th Avenue.
2. After you cross the intersection of Lake Otis Parkway, the street becomes Providence Drive.
3. The hospital is on the right side of the road. You may park in the main lot or in the visitor parking garage. Parking is free.

From the Mat-Su region:
1. From Glenn Highway, take the Bragaw exit.
2. At the stop light, turn left onto Bragaw.
3. Continue to Northern Lights Blvd. Turn right.
4. Continue to University Drive. Turn left.
5. Continue to Providence Drive. Turn left.
6. Turn right onto the hospital campus. You may park in the main lot or in the visitor parking garage. Parking is free.

After 9 p.m., the main entrance to the hospital is locked. If you arrive between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., you’ll need to use the emergency department entrance.

When you arrive, our staff will orient you to the NICU so you can navigate your way around the department.

Visiting

The Children’s Hospital at Providence promotes family-centered care. Parent are never considered visitors here – you are family. You are welcome in the NICU 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Your visitors and support people are also welcome. At times, we may ask visitors to step out of the unit for a short time. This is for privacy and safety reasons.

Sibling visits
Before they visit, brothers and sisters between the ages of 2 and 8 meet with a child life specialist. This person is professionally trained to prepare children for the sights and sounds of the NICU. The specialist will recommend visitation guidelines based on each child’s ability to handle the critical care environment.

For an appointment with a child life specialist, call 907-212-8216 and leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. Brothers and sisters who are at least 9 years old may visit with their parents. We have a tip sheet that can help parents prepare these older siblings for their visit to the NICU. If you would like a copy, please let us know.
Visiting (continued)

Entering the unit
The NICU is located within the Maternity Center near the main entrance of the hospital. When you come in the hospital’s main entrance, the staff at the information desk can direct you to where you will be buzzed into the NICU. (For security reasons, the NICU is a locked unit.) Once you are through the locked doors, continue down the hallway to the NICU front desk and ask for assistance.

Health screenings and hand washing
Your baby’s health is our first priority. Being exposed even to a simple cold can be dangerous for NICU babies.
We screen the health of everyone who comes into the NICU. If you are sick, think you might be getting sick, or have recently been around someone who is sick, please tell us.
We ask all staff, family and visitors to wash their hands when they arrive and before they touch the baby.

A healing environment for you
To help ease your stress, the NICU includes specially designed areas. You may prepare small meals in the family kitchen, eat in the dining area, or just relax in one of our three sunrooms. Laundry, restroom and shower facilities are also available. Please let us know if we can do anything to make you more comfortable while you are here.

On-campus guest house
Hickel House is our on-campus guest house. It offers affordable lodging for patients and families on a first-come, first-served basis. You can reach Hickel House from the hospital by walking across our indoor sky bridge or by driving around campus to entrance No. 12.
A social worker or charge nurse can help you get a room at Hickel House, or you may make reservations yourself. For reservations, please call 907-212-4100 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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A healing environment for you (continued)

Area hotels and military lodging
Many hotels are located near the hospital. Please let us know if you need help finding a place to stay.

Military personnel may be able to stay at Fisher House on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. For information about Fisher House, please call 907-552-2454.

Dining options
Food is available for purchase at numerous locations on the hospital campus.
- The main cafeteria is open from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily and from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., Monday-Friday.
- Creekside Café, located on the second floor of Tower T, is open from 6:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. daily.
- Coffee courts serve espresso beverages as well as grab-and-go items on the first floor of the hospital, next to the gift shop and the emergency department.
- Subway, located on the basement level of Tower A, is open daily with varying hours.
- Vending machines are located near the cafeteria and on each floor next to the D elevator.

Many local restaurants are within a short drive of the hospital. Some will deliver food to you at the hospital.

Contact us
We are honored to be part of your family’s journey at this difficult time. While we are providing state-of-the-art care to your baby, we also want to support you as a family.

You are welcome to call us at any time: 907-212-3614.
OUR MISSION

As people of Providence, we reveal God’s love for all, especially the poor and vulnerable, through our compassionate service.

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect, Compassion, Justice, Excellence, Stewardship

Newborn Intensive Care Unit
Providence Alaska Medical Center
3200 Providence Drive
Anchorage, AK 99519
907-212-3614

Alaska.Providence.org

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ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 888-311-9127 (TTY: 711).