

Parent Information Booklet

Information for the parents and families of sick newborn and premature babies cared for in a South West London Hospital



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South West London
Neonatal Network

St George's Hospital, St Helier Hospital, Kingston Hospital,
Mayday University Hospital, Epsom General Hospital

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General Information

Introduction to the Neonatal Unit

Welcome to the Neonatal Unit. The unit is specially designed and equipped to care for sick and pre-term babies.

Everyone hopes that their pregnancy will go smoothly and do not consider that their baby could be born in advance of the due date.

Babies are admitted to a neonatal unit for various reasons - the reality is that one in 10 babies in the UK spends at least a few days in a neonatal unit. The length of stay is determined by the level of care baby requires. The three levels of care are:

- **Intensive Care** - involves the whole range of medical care for critically ill babies who need continuous observation and support of organ function.
- **High Dependency Care** – babies who are not critically ill but require continuous support for neonatal conditions such as breathing and intravenous nutrition.
- **Special Care** – continuous care for babies requiring specialist support including tube feeding, oxygen and light therapy (phototherapy).

Staff in the Neonatal Unit

The Senior Nurse and Sisters are in charge of nursing staff of all grades, including some in training. The medical staff consist of Consultants, Registrars and Senior House Officers.

If your baby requires surgery, a Paediatric Consultant Surgeon will also be involved in your baby's care. Other staff you may see visiting the unit include Physiotherapists, Radiographers, Pharmacists, Dieticians and Social Workers.

Each unit offers spiritual support. Please refer to the individual sections at the back of this booklet for more information.

What are Neonatal Networks?

A network consists of a number of hospitals within a geographical area with different types of neonatal units. The purpose of each network is to ensure that, with limited exceptions, mothers and babies receive their care within the network area or, occasionally, an adjacent network area. Mothers should receive care as near to home as possible and to know in advance that should a problem arise with their baby where and how the care will be provided. Where babies are transferred for longer-term intensive care, networks will aim to ensure early return to a local hospital.

Each neonatal unit within a network has been designated to provide different levels of care. Some units provide special care only (level 1), most provide high dependency and limited intensive care (level 2) and some provide the full range of intensive care (level 3). Some level 3 units also provide specialist surgery.



There are five neonatal units in the South West London Neonatal Network:

St George's Hospital	level 3
St Helier Hospital	level 2
Kingston Hospital	level 2
Mayday University Hospital	level 2
Epsom General Hospital	level 1

Equipment

Some of the equipment can seem rather frightening when you first come into the unit but the staff will be pleased to explain it all to you.

- **Ventilators** – Breathing difficulties are the most common problem for pre-term babies, although occasionally sick newborn babies may also be affected. The lungs of pre-term babies are not fully developed and the babies can become tired when breathing. They are helped by a machine called a ventilator, which pumps oxygen into the baby's lungs via a tube. This support will be provided until the baby can breathe without help.
- **Suction** – When the baby is not able to cough up mucus, a small plastic tube attached to a gentle vacuum can be used to clear the nose, mouth and throat. This procedure is very common with babies who need a ventilator.
- **Phototherapy** – This is a blue/white light treatment to help reduce jaundice. Jaundice is common in pre-term babies, usually appearing a few days after birth. It appears as a yellowish colouring of the skin and the whites of the eyes, and is due to the fact that the liver of a newborn baby is not mature enough to cope with the natural breakdown of red

blood cells. The baby will be nursed naked under these lights to ensure as much as possible of the body is exposed to the lights. Whilst under these lights, the baby's eyes must be protected by an eye shield.

- **Monitors** – On admission to the unit, the baby may have leads attached to the chest and legs which will be connected to the monitors. These monitors will show us the baby's heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure and temperature. Other monitors will tell how much oxygen is in the baby's body, and if the baby needs more or less oxygen. All monitors are used so that the staff can observe the baby's condition without disturbing them.
- **Portable incubators** – Sometimes a baby may need specialist treatment which is not available at the hospital. In these circumstances, the baby will be moved by ambulance in a portable incubator, accompanied by a member of the nursing team, doctor or the dedicated Neonatal Transport Service team. Whilst the baby is having care at another hospital, the staff keep in contact with the hospital by phone and usually the baby returns as soon as possible.

Neonatal Transport Service

The Neonatal Transfer Service (NTS) is a dedicated transfer service for London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, which transports babies safely from one neonatal unit to another. The NTS has four specialist teams and uses ambulances which have been specially for newborn babies. The service is provided to

all babies needing transport from or to a neonatal unit within London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Parents will always be given information about the unit to which their baby is being transferred.

You and Your Baby

About your baby

As parents the neonatal unit might disturb you, but bear in mind that the equipment you see is designed to aid your baby's recovery process.

Staff on the unit are very supportive and will try to answer any questions you might have.

It is likely to be an emotional time for you and it is advisable to seek emotional support or discuss your feelings with other parents who have been in similar situations. Members of staff on the unit can inform you of available parental support and how to access it.

Overleaf are links to useful organisations that can also provide further information.

Your involvement

Staff recognise that being separated from your baby will cause you concern. Having a photo of your baby may comfort you and lessen the feelings of separation.

Even though you are apart, it is important for you to help and care for your baby. There are many ways to soothe and

comfort your baby and it is important for you to touch or cuddle them as soon as possible; staff will help you achieve this. In addition, babies love sounds and will recognise voices, so talk to your baby when you visit as this can relax them. Babies will look at strongly contrasting colours, black and white and bright colours. You can provide stimulation by providing picture books in black and white, also a small soft toy. Staff will show you how to

wash, change the nappy and give mouth care to your baby. They will stay with you, helping you, until you feel confident in caring for your baby.

Feeding

Breastmilk is the best food for your newborn baby, particularly for premature babies who are more vulnerable to infection. Staff will encourage and support you to express your milk for as long as your baby is on the unit. Whilst your baby is unable to breastfeed, your milk will be fed by a small tube into the baby's stomach. Your excess breastmilk can be stored in a freezer on the unit.

If your baby will be bottle feeding, staff on the unit will give you support and advice.

Information for fathers

This can be a difficult time for fathers. You may find yourself worrying about your partner and baby and coping with daily practicalities. The help of friends and family with the day to day tasks will allow you to spend more time with mum and baby in hospital.

It is also helpful to keep your employer well informed and updated on baby's progress to enable them to anticipate your time off and arrange suitable cover.

On the unit staff will help you to care for your baby and encourage you to bond with and get to know baby. You may find that you deal with the situation differently from your partner - this is normal. Parents often find it useful to share their thoughts with each other.

Useful links and organisations

Here is a list of websites to help you find any further information you need:

- www.neonatal.org.uk – Providing information on neonatal networks
- www.24weeksplus.com – for parents of pre-term infants. Email contact only
- www.birthdefects.co.uk – Birth Defects Foundation – 0870 070720
- www.bliss.org.uk – BLISS, the premature baby charity. Helpline – 0500 618 140
- www.borntoosoon.org.uk – Born Too Soon, supporting parents at Kingston Hospital – 0208 974 9157
- www.bacp.co.uk – British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy – bacp@bacp.co.uk
- www.childbereavement.org.uk – Child Bereavement Trust – 0845 357 1000
- www.cafamily.org.uk – Contact a Family, supporting families of disabled children – 08088 083 555

- www.sids.org.uk – Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths – 0207 227 5212
- www.multiplebirths.org.uk – Multiple Births Foundation – 020 8383 3041
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk – NHS Direct – 0845 4647
- www.uk-sands.org – SANDS, Stillbirths and Neonatal Death Society – 0207 436 5881
- www.tamba.org.uk – TAMBA, Twins and Multiple Births Association – 0800 138 0509
- www.twin2twin.org –Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome Association – 0208 581 7359
- www.babyfriendly.org.uk – UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative – 0207 312 7652
- www.tcf.org.uk – The Compassionate Friends (UK) is an organisation of bereaved parents offering understanding and support – 0845 123 2304
- www.childdeathhelpline.org – Child Death Helpline – 0800 282 986

Discharge planning

Before your baby is discharged, please discuss any concerns you may have about future support and advice with unit staff.

About the Units

Kingston Hospital



NHS Trust



Kingston Hospital Neonatal Unit

Galsworthy Road
Kingston
Surrey
KT2 7QB

Tel: 020 8546 7711 ext 2420/1

Direct Tel: 020 8974 5390

Websites:

www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk

www.borntoosoon.org.uk



Kingston Hospital Neonatal Unit

Introduction

Kingston is a level 2 unit with capacity for 24 babies: two in Intensive Care, four in High Dependency and 18 in Special Care.

Getting there by rail

Norbiton Station is five minutes' walk from the hospital.

By bus

A number of buses stop frequently at the main entrance of the hospital.

Visiting times

There is open visiting for parents. Other family members and friends must visit between 3.00pm - 8.00pm. One parent must be present at all times when other family members and friends are visiting. Due to the risk of infection, no children other than siblings may visit.

Facilities

Parking

The hospital has a visitors' car park with a pay and display facility, and also designated disabled parking spaces. Parking is also available (pay and display) in Wolverton Avenue, adjacent to the hospital.

Cash points

One cash point is situated at the main hospital entrance.

Catering/refreshments

The staff restaurant and Seasons Café are open to visitors to buy meals. Snacks can also be bought in Costa Coffee at the main entrance.

Local shops

Newspapers, magazines, etc, can be bought at the main entrance.

Facilities and accommodation for parents

A family room with television, toys and books is available. An adult must always be present to supervise children. A library of books and information is available to parents free of charge on the unit.

Hot drinks are available from the maternity unit (free of charge for parents). Cold drinks are available on the neonatal unit. Refreshments can be consumed in the family room, but no food storage or preparation facilities are available.

Mobile phones must not be used within the confines of the neonatal unit. A pay phone is situated at the maternity unit reception.

Religious support/ counselling services

Roman Catholic and Church of England Chaplains are available 24 hours a day. Arrangements can be made for a minister of your own faith to visit. There is a chapel available, open to 8.00pm daily.

Born Too Soon is a parental support group set up by parents and staff for families whose baby/babies are being cared for on the unit. The parent support co-ordinator Pauline Woods visits the unit daily. An informal support group also meets weekly at a local venue. Please ask staff on the unit for details.

Other

Access to interpreters

Access is available on request to the staff on the unit.

Ward rounds

Parents will be informed of the timing of ward rounds to help them plan their visits. Ward rounds take place each morning and, to protect the confidentiality of all babies on the unit, parents cannot be present while they are in progress.

The time taken can vary considerably depending on the number of babies being cared for. As Kingston is a teaching hospital, ward rounds are often used as teaching sessions for students. If mum is still an inpatient, a member of staff will inform her once the ward round has finished. Parents have an opportunity throughout the day to speak to staff caring for their baby. If parents wish to speak to a Consultant, a time will be arranged for them to meet on the unit.

Midwifery care

The postnatal wards are adjacent to the neonatal unit. Mums who are inpatients on the maternity unit will continue to receive their care from midwives. Mums who have been discharged and have a baby on the neonatal unit will see a midwife from the transitional care unit daily. If the baby is admitted to the neonatal unit immediately after birth, photographs of the baby will be given to mum with a congratulations card. As soon as mum is well enough, she will be taken to see the baby on the neonatal unit. Partners are encouraged to visit the baby as soon as possible, they are also welcome to accompany the baby to the neonatal unit upon admission. The medical team will speak to both parents as soon as the baby has been admitted and stabilised.



Helping to care for your baby

Parents are encouraged to participate in the baby's care as soon as their condition allows. Parents are encouraged to touch and talk to their baby and take photographs. The unit allows parents to bring in a small new toy that can be placed in the incubator or cot as a personal gift. A photograph of the baby's family may also be placed in the incubator or cot. Nursing staff will always be on hand to help and support parents in caring for their babies.

Treatment/procedures

Consent is required for hearing screening and surgical procedures. Where possible, all investigations and treatments carried out on babies will be discussed with parents. For more in-depth discussions about their baby's treatment and progress, parents will have the opportunity to speak to a Paediatric Registrar or Consultant.

Going home

Babies will be discharged from the unit when clinically well in accordance with the unit's discharge policy. This will be discussed with parents. Parents are encouraged to room in for a night before discharge. The community neonatal nurse will visit babies who have had complex medical needs to help with transition from unit to home. During this time, parents will be introduced to their health visitor and care will be gradually handed over. If a baby is to be sent home on medication, parents will be shown before discharge how to administer the right doses of medication to the baby. If the baby needs specialist medical follow-up/care at home, the family will be introduced to the paediatric outreach nursing team who will visit baby at home.

PALS, Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Available on the hospital site, open 8.00am - 8.00pm, Monday - Friday.
Tel: 020 8934 3993
Email: pals@kingstonhospital.nhs.uk

Mayday Healthcare



NHS Trust

Mayday University Hospital Neonatal Unit
530 London Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR7 7YE

Tel: 020 8401 3000
Direct Tel: 020 8401 3191

Website:
www.maydayhospital.nhs.uk

Mayday University Hospital Neonatal Unit

Introduction

Mayday is a level 2 unit with capacity for 26 babies: three in Intensive Care, four in High Dependency and 19 in Special Care.

The neonatal unit is situated on the ground floor of the maternity department.

Getting there by rail

West Croydon Station in London Road is the nearest station and all buses leaving opposite the station stop at Mayday Hospital (about one and a half miles). From Thornton Heath Station in Brigstock Road, cross over the road and take bus 250 to the hospital.

By bus

A number of buses stop in London Road directly outside the hospital.

Visiting times

There is open visiting - parents must escort all visitors. Apart from siblings, other children are not allowed to visit. During doctor's round and nursing handover, visitors will be requested to leave the nursery.

Facilities

Car parking

The hospital operates a pay and display car park. Pay and display parking is also available in Woodcroft Road at the back of the hospital.

Cash points

Two cash points are available at the main entrance of the hospital.

Catering/refreshments

A canteen is available on the first floor of the hospital, and there is a spacious eating area including a Burger King and small coffee shop on the ground floor.

Local shops

The foyer of the main entrance has a florist/gift shop, hairdresser, boutique, convenience store and post box.

Facilities and accommodation for parents

A sitting room and kitchen are available for families. There are also two mother and cot rooms available.

If mum is an inpatient, she will have a bed on the postnatal ward. If mum is not an inpatient, there is limited availability for mum and dad to room in.

Religious support/counselling services

There is an on call hospital chaplaincy service 24 hours a day. A nominated Roman Catholic priest and Imam are available, with other religious leaders available locally via the chaplaincy service.

Other

Access to interpreters

Telephone interpreters in all commonly used languages are available immediately via Language Line, face to face interpreters can also be arranged. Sign language interpreters are also available for parents who are hard of hearing.

Ward rounds

Ward rounds are held daily between 9.30am - 12.30pm. Parents are asked to leave the unit whilst ward rounds are in progress due to lack of space and to protect the confidentiality of all babies on the unit. Parents will have the opportunity to speak to Consultants at the end of each ward round.

Midwifery care

The postnatal ward is adjacent to the neonatal unit. If a baby is taken to the neonatal unit straight after birth, as soon as mum is well enough the midwife on duty will take her to the neonatal unit to visit. Where mum is not well enough to go to the unit, she will be updated regularly throughout the day on baby's progress.

Helping to care for your baby

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their baby's care from the start. The state of baby's health will determine the amount of help parents can give, but as baby's condition improves, parents will be shown how to handle and care for their baby more.

Treatment/procedures

Whilst the baby is on the unit, blood will be taken regularly for investigations and to ensure the most appropriate treatment. Parents will be informed regularly of their baby's progress and treatment will be discussed with them.

Going home

Babies will only be discharged when breast/bottle feeding is fully established. Mum will have the opportunity to room in with baby before discharge to ensure she is ready to take baby home.

Once the baby is discharged, the community midwife will make a follow-up call. If baby is over 10 days old, visits will be made by the health visitor. If the baby is on oxygen or nasogastric tube feeding, they will be referred to the paediatric home care team for follow-up visits.

PALS, Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Available on the first floor of the London Wing, open 10.00am - 3.30pm, Monday - Friday.

Tel: 020 8401 3210

Email: pals@mayday.nhs.uk

St George's Healthcare **NHS**

NHS Trust

St George's Neonatal Unit
Blackshaw Road
Tooting
London
SW17 0QT

Tel: 020 8672 1255

Website:
www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

St George's Neonatal Unit

Introduction

St George's is a 30-cot regional neonatal unit providing medical and surgical care for pre-term and term babies.

Getting there

The hospital main entrance is in Blackshaw Road. Other pedestrian entrances are in Cranmer Terrace, Effort Street (6.00am – 10.00pm) and Cambole Road (7.00am – 6.00pm).

By Tube

Tooting Broadway Station on the Northern Line is a 10 minutes walk from the pedestrian entrance in Effort Street. Buses 155, 219, 264, 280, G1 go to the hospital from Tooting Broadway Station.

Visiting times

There is open visiting 24 hours a day, except during staff handover to maintain confidentiality. Parents must specify who may visit unaccompanied (ie, without a parent present).

Facilities

Car parking

Parking at the hospital is limited. On the perimeter, it is restricted to staff and disabled badge holders. Visitors may use the pay and display car park at the junction of Blackshaw Road and Maybury Street. Access to the car park is via Blackshaw Road.

The hospital operates a pay on exit car park. The charges are displayed at the entrance and are paid on exit. All money raised goes directly to support the work of the hospital.

Concessions are available, please ask the staff in the unit.

Cash points

A Natwest cash point is located in the foyer of the medical school.

Catering/refreshments

The hospital canteen is open all day for drinks and sandwiches and also serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Peabody's Café, in the medical school foyer, is open 9.00am - 5.30pm, Monday - Friday.

Local shops

There is a paper shop in the main entrance and a flower shop in Grosvenor Wing. The medical school shop also supplies drinks and sandwiches.

Facilities and accommodation for parents

A family room, with a pay phone, TV, microwave, beverage facilities and dining area, is available on the unit, with a play area with toys for children.

Three bedrooms for overnight stays are available and are prioritised for the parents of very sick babies, those who will be discharged shortly or for parents living a long way away.

Ronald McDonald House, in the hospital grounds provides short-term accommodation for parents, which can be arranged through the Sister in charge or the unit housekeeper.

Parents may have their mobile phone with them while in the neonatal unit but the phone must be switched to "silent". If you need to answer your phone, you are asked to leave the nursery to do so.

Religious support/ counselling services

A counsellor is available for the unit and consultations are easily arranged. Religious leaders from all faiths can come in to support families and there are currently Church of England, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Free Church chaplains available on site.

Other

Access to interpreters

For families who cannot communicate fluently in English, face to face interpreting can be made available. Language Line offers telephone interpreting with almost immediate access.

Ward rounds

At the time of admission, parents will be informed about times of ward rounds and nursing handover. Parents are asked to leave the unit whilst these are in progress due to lack of space and to protect the confidentiality of all babies on the unit. Ward rounds allow the clinical team to discuss care plans of babies on the unit and can be used as a teaching session for trainee medical staff.

Midwifery care

The postnatal ward is in Lanesborough Wing on the fourth floor, the same as the neonatal unit. If the baby is taken to the neonatal unit straight after birth, dad will go with the baby, who will be photographed and the photo given to mum as soon as possible. Before being transferred to the postnatal ward, mum will be taken to visit baby.

Helping to care for your baby

Unit staff encourage parents to get involved in nappy changing, mouth care and making the baby comfortable. They are also encouraged to talk, sing and read to the baby and, depending on the baby's condition, will be shown how to touch/hold the baby. Nurses will support parents as much as possible.

Treatment/procedures

Whilst baby is on the unit, blood will be taken regularly for investigations and to ensure the most appropriate treatment. A consent form will need to be signed for hearing screening, the Guthrie test and where baby might require surgery. Parents will be verbally informed of baby's progress and will have the opportunity to speak to Consultants for further explanations.

Going home

Babies will only be discharged when breast/bottle feeding is fully established. Preparation for discharge starts early and part of the process is getting parents to build confidence in caring for their baby, including resuscitation training and administering medicines. Parents will have the opportunity to room in with their baby for up to three nights before discharge.

Once the baby is discharged, the community team will maintain contact and visit at home from the day after discharge. If the baby is discharged on home oxygen, a community nurse will go home with the parents to ensure everything is working and the parents are confident. Home visits will continue as necessary. On the day of discharge, the health visiting team is notified and a health visitor will make contact with the parents soon afterwards.

A follow-up outpatient appointment will be made. If the baby becomes unwell, parents are advised to call their GP or take the baby to A&E. Discharge summaries of high risk babies are sent to A&E, so if a baby is admitted they can be fast tracked.

PALS, Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Available in Grosvenor Wing at the main entrance, open 9.00am-5.00pm, Monday – Friday.

Tel: 020 8725 2453

Email: pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals



NHS Trust

St Helier Hospital Neonatal Unit

Wrythe Lane
Carshalton
Surrey
SM5 1AA

Tel: 020 8296 2000

Website:

www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk

St Helier Hospital Neonatal Unit

Introduction

Facilities for sick and premature babies include a neonatal unit at St Helier Hospital and a special care baby unit at Epsom General Hospital. In total, they have 12 Intensive Care and High Dependency cots and 18 Special Care cots.

Getting there by rail

Sutton Station is nearest to St Helier, with buses from there to the hospital. Morden Underground Station on the Northern Line also has bus connections to the hospital.

By bus

Buses 151, 157 and S1 serve the hospital.

Visiting times

There is open visiting, but siblings and adult visitors must be accompanied by at least one parent. Children other than siblings are not allowed to visit.

Facilities

Car parking

There is a car park at the main entrance of the hospital, with pay and display tickets and disabled parking spaces. Reduced fees are available for parents by arrangement with the neonatal unit.

Cash points

Cash point facilities are available on the ground floor of the hospital.

Catering/refreshments

There is a League of Friends tea bar in Ferguson House and a restaurant in the main hospital where parents can buy meals.

Local shops

There is a shop in the main entrance of the hospital, and various local shops nearby.

Facilities and accommodation for parents

A parents' sitting room is available on the unit, with tea and coffee facilities close by.

Three accommodation rooms are available for parents who may need to stay over. These are limited to parents whose baby is very sick or is about to be discharged so that they can have a trial period alone with the baby, and parents who are finding it difficult to breast feed. Parents who live too far from the hospital and find it difficult to travel back home easily will also be allowed to use a room

Religious support/counselling services

Chaplains are available 24 hours a day to everyone regardless of faith, race, culture, gender or sexual orientation.

Other

Access to interpreters

Interpreting support is provided face to face or by telephone.

Ward rounds

Ward rounds take place daily and parents will be allowed on the unit during this time only while their baby is being discussed. This is to protect the confidentiality of all babies on the unit.

Midwifery care

Mums who are inpatients on the maternity ward will continue to receive their care from midwives. Mums who have been discharged and have a baby in the neonatal unit will see a midwife on the maternity unit for any necessary care. If the baby is taken to the neonatal unit straight after birth, mum will be given a photo of the baby and will be taken to visit the baby as soon as she is well enough.

Helping to care for your baby

Parents are encouraged to participate in their baby's care from the beginning. The state of the baby's health will determine the amount of care parents can give, but as the baby's condition improves, the parents will be shown how to handle and care for their baby more.

Treatment/procedures

Whilst the baby is on the unit, blood will be taken regularly for investigations and to ensure the most appropriate treatment. Parents will be informed regularly of their baby's progress and treatment will be discussed with them.

Going home

Babies are discharged when clinically well and feeding has been established. Parents are encouraged to room in for at least two nights before the baby is discharged to prepare them for caring for the baby at home. The community midwife will make home visits, but where the baby needs more specific care - ie, home oxygen or tube feeding - they will be followed up by the community paediatric home care team.

PALS, Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Located at the main entrance next to reception.

Tel: 020 8296 2508

Email: pals@epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk

Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals



NHS Trust

Epsom General Hospital Neonatal Unit
Dorking Road
Epsom
Surrey
KT18 7EG

Tel: 01372 735 279

Website:
www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk

Epsom General Hospital Neonatal Unit

Introduction

Facilities for sick and premature babies include a neonatal unit at St Helier Hospital and a special care baby unit at Epsom General Hospital. In total, they have 12 Intensive Care and High Dependency cots and 18 Special Care cots: Epsom General has nine of the Special Care cots and one stabilisation cot.

Getting there by rail

Epsom Station is 20 minutes' walk from Epsom General.

By bus

Buses 166, 293, 408, 479, E5 and K10 serve the hospital.

Visiting times

There is open visiting for parents. Other visitors may visit between 10.00am – 12noon, 3.00pm - 5.00pm and 6.30pm – 7.30pm and must be accompanied by a parent. Children other than siblings are not allowed to visit.

Facilities

Car parking

There is a car park at the main entrance of the hospital, with pay and display tickets, and disabled parking spaces. Reduced fees are available for parents by arrangement with the neonatal unit.

Cash points

Cash point facilities are available in the main hospital.

Catering/refreshments

There is a WRVS tea bar in the main hospital building, and a restaurant where parents can buy meals.

Local shops

The main Epsom shopping centre is within easy walking distance.

Facilities and accommodation for parents

A parents' sitting room is available near the unit, with tea and coffee facilities close by. One accommodation room is available for parents who may need to stay over. This is limited to parents whose baby is very sick or is about to be discharged so that they can have a trial period alone with the baby, and parents who are finding it difficult to breast feed.

Religious support/counselling services

Chaplains are available 24 hours a day to everyone regardless of faith, race, culture, gender or sexual orientation.

Other

Access to interpreters

Interpreting support is provided face to face or by telephone.

Ward rounds

Ward rounds take place daily and parents will be allowed on the unit during this time only while their baby is being discussed. This is to protect the confidentiality of all babies on the unit.

Midwifery care

Mums who are inpatients on the maternity ward will continue to receive their care from midwives. Mums who have been discharged and have a baby in the neonatal unit will see a midwife on the maternity unit for any necessary care. If the baby is taken to the neonatal unit straight after birth, mum will be given a photo of the baby and will be taken to visit the baby as soon as she is well enough.

Helping to care for your baby

Parents are encouraged to participate in their baby's care from the beginning. The state of the baby's health will determine the amount of care parents can give, but as the baby's condition improves, the parents will be shown how to handle and care for their baby more.

Treatment/procedures

Whilst the baby is on the unit, blood will be taken regularly for investigations and to ensure the most appropriate treatment. Parents will be informed regularly of their baby's progress and treatment will be discussed with them.

Going home

Babies are discharged when clinically well and feeding has been established. Parents are encouraged to room in for at least two nights before the baby is discharged to prepare them for caring for the baby at home. The community midwife will make home visits, but where the baby needs more specific care - ie, home oxygen or tube feeding - they will be followed up by the community paediatric home care team.

PALS, Patient Advice and Liaison Service

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