

FOR NICU FAMILIES · FROM ONE

The NICU *Questions List*

In the NICU, information comes fast, and usually when you're tired. It's hard to know what to ask, and easy to forget the answer by the time you reach the car. Bring this list to the bedside, to rounds, or to a phone call with the unit. Every NICU stay is different, so skip what doesn't fit and add your own.

Ask when a good time is.

"When's a good time to go over a few questions?" is always fair.

Ask for plain language.

"Can you explain that without the medical words?" is a normal request.

Repeat it back.

"So what I'm hearing is..." helps you check you understood.

It's okay to ask again.

Nobody expects you to remember everything the first time.

01 Daily check-ins

- ☐ How was the night (or the day)?
- ☐ Did anything change since I was last here?
- ☐ What's the plan for today? Are any tests or procedures scheduled?
- ☐ Has anything in the plan changed, like feeds, medicines, or breathing support?
- ☐ Is there anything you'd like me to do, bring, or watch for?
- ☐ When will the doctors next update us?

NOTES

02 Feeding and growing

- ☐ How is my baby being fed right now (through a tube, IV, bottle, or breast)?
- ☐ How much is my baby getting, and how often?
- ☐ How is my baby's weight trending? How often is my baby weighed?
- ☐ When might my baby be ready to try feeding by mouth? What signs do you look for?
- ☐ If I'm pumping, can I meet with a lactation consultant? How should I store and label milk?
- ☐ Is anything being added to my baby's milk, and why?

NOTES

03 Breathing support

- ☐ What kind of breathing support is my baby on right now, and why?
- ☐ What would need to happen for that support to be lowered?
- ☐ What do the alarms on the monitor mean, and which ones should I tell you about?
- ☐ What oxygen range are you aiming for with my baby?
- ☐ Is it okay for me to hold my baby with this equipment in place?

NOTES

04 Going home

- ☐ What does my baby need to be able to do before going home?
- ☐ Is there a rough timeline? What could change it?
- ☐ What should we learn before discharge (feeding, medicines, equipment, infant CPR)?
- ☐ Will my baby need any special equipment or follow-up appointments?
- ☐ Do we need to choose a pediatrician now?
- ☐ Does the hospital offer a chance to room in or stay overnight before discharge?

NOTES

05 Support for you

- ☐ Is there a social worker I can talk to?
- ☐ Is there help with parking, meals, gas, or a place to sleep near the hospital?
- ☐ Are there parent support groups or other NICU parents I can talk to?
- ☐ Who can I talk to if I'm feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or low?
- ☐ Is there anything I can do for my other kids so they understand what's happening?

NOTES

06 Who's who on our team

NICU teams can be large, and roles vary by hospital. A place to write down names as you learn them.

Attending doctor this week _____

Primary nurse / team _____

Nurse today _____

Charge nurse _____

Social worker _____

Lactation consultant _____

Unit phone / best time to call _____

Who to talk to with a concern _____

07 A few to ask yourself

- ☐ When did I last eat a real meal, drink water, and sleep?
- ☐ Who can I hand one task to this week?
- ☐ What do I want to remember about today?

NOTES

08 My own questions
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You're not being a bother by asking. You're your baby's parent, and you're part of the team. From our family to yours: bring the list, ask the question, and ask it again if you need to.