

Procedure/Treatment/Home Care

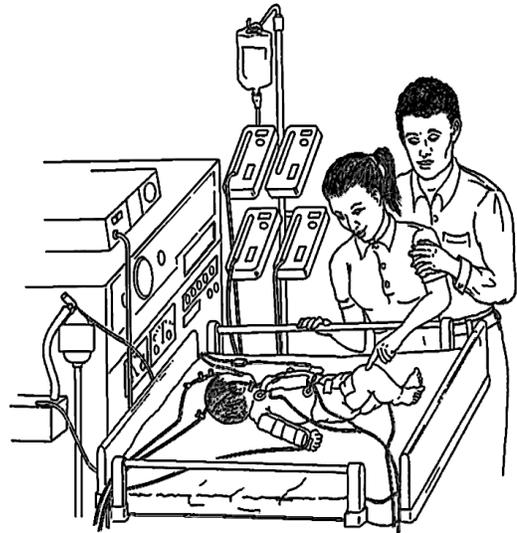
Si usted desea esta información en español,
por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

#796

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Brothers and Sisters of a NICU Baby

It can be hard on a family to have a baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It can change home life, and can upset brothers and sisters. They worry about the baby and the rest of the family, and wonder if it will ever go back to the way it was. After the baby is in the NICU for several weeks, many brothers and sisters behave differently. Here are some ways you can help your baby's brothers and sisters.



For All Brothers and Sisters:

- Help your child talk about how he or she feels about the baby.
- Answer your child's questions about the baby. Tell the truth about the baby, but keep it simple.
- If your child does not want to visit the baby, do not make the child visit. Show the child photos, instead.
- Before your child visits the baby, tell him or her what to expect: what the room looks like, the sounds in the room, the machines and tubes and wires, and what the baby looks like.

It can be hard on a family to have a baby in the NICU. It can change home life, and can upset brothers and sisters.

- Before visiting, your child's hands should be washed very well.
 - ☐ To learn how, ask your nurse for the handout, **Good Handwashing, #100**
- When the child cannot visit the baby, bring the child photos of the baby.
- When you are away from home, have the same person or people take care of your child. Whoever takes care of your child should keep the same rules for behavior you use with the child.

Be ready for questions. Brothers and sisters of a baby in NICU usually ask:

- Is the baby going to die?
- Why is the baby so sick?
- Why is the baby so small?
- Does the baby hurt?
- When will the baby come home?
- Will I get sick, too?

For a Toddler:

- Children between 1 and 3 years old may not understand why a baby is born early. You may bring the child to visit the baby when the time is right. Bring an adult to watch the child when you are spending more time with the new baby.
- The child should only stay with the baby for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Ask the baby's nurse how to best let the child see and touch the baby.
- Spend time alone with your child, to play and talk.
- You may give your child a baby doll to take care of.
- You may give your child a gift from the baby. You may have your child make or buy a gift to give the baby.



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For a Preschooler:

- Do the same things it says for toddlers, above.
- Expect your child to act like a toddler sometimes. This is called regressive behavior. Do not punish your child for doing this.
- Read or tell your child stories about a baby in the NICU. Give your child a doll to play with, pretending it is a baby in the NICU. Help your child talk about how he or she feels.
- Use a calendar and stickers to show your child times for visiting the baby.

For a School-Aged Child or Teen:

- Ask the child to tell you what he or she understands about the baby. If the child does not understand something, or believes something that is not true, explain it.
- Let your child talk about the baby with friends.
- Ask the baby's nurse how to best let the child hold the baby.
- Your child or teen may want to keep a diary, journal, or weight chart about the baby.
- Your child may help tell friends and family that the baby was born, or is coming home.
- Tell the child's teachers about the baby in NICU. They may be able to help your child through this difficult time.

Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor what you will tell your baby's brothers and sisters. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor how you can help your baby's brothers and sisters while the baby is in the NICU. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

August 24, 2016 • DRAFT to family review
#796 • Written by Abbie Bates, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain

Brothers and Sisters of a NICU Baby

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!