

Going home with your baby

Information & support in the community

Congratulations! Your baby is now ready to go home! It is not unusual to feel a mixture of emotions including nervous, relief, fear and happiness about taking your baby home for the first time from the Neonatal Unit. It is a time for celebration, but it can also be a time for uncertainty.

The transition from hospital to home is a big step for you, your baby and your family.

Remember - your baby is only coming home because he or she is well enough to leave the unit.

If your baby has ongoing medical issues, these issues will be ones that the team have worked through with you to support you in caring for your baby at home.

It is very important that you register your baby with your GP ideally before your baby is discharged home.

The following websites include transporting your baby home; parent tips for going home; Settling in with your baby; Going home with multiples; Support in your area.

Bliss

www.bliss.org.uk/parents/going-home/preparing-to-go-home/going-home-with-your-baby



Support for parents UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/support-for-parents/



Feeding your baby at home

In the first few weeks you may find your baby's feeding pattern is irregular. This is normal as each baby is an individual and can be fed according to his/her own needs. If you think your baby is feeding too much or too little, discuss it with your health visitor, GP or with one of the community team if you are having community follow up.

You can be sure your baby is getting enough milk if he/she has plenty of wet nappies, is growing and is alert and awake for some of the time. Please refer to UNICEF website above.

For breastfeeding support in your area and additional resources please go to page: 7

For formula feeding and making up infant milks safely

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/bottle-feeding-resources/infant-formula-responsive-bottle-feeding-guide-for-parents/



www.firststepsnutrition.org/making-infant-milk-safely/



Regulating your baby's temperature at home

Babies are unable to regulate their body temperature in the way adults do. However, by the time your baby comes home, he/she will be reasonably good at controlling their own body temperature.

If your baby still weighs below 2.5kg, he/she may still need to be kept a bit warmer than bigger babies. It may take some time for your baby to adjust to this new home temperature.

Remember to take off your baby's outdoor clothes once you are inside. Babies do not need to wear hats indoors.

If you are concerned your baby is unwell

Seek medical advice with your GP, or if necessary call 999. We recommend you download the following HANDi App. This provides expert advice on how best to manage the six most common childhood illnesses; diarrhoea and vomiting, high temperature, chestiness, new born problems and tummy pain:

www.ruh.nhs.uk/patients/services/clinical_depts/paediatrics/handi_app.asp



Safer sleep

The Back to Sleep campaign advises parents that babies should always sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome ('Cot death').

- Only sit your baby in a car seat when travelling
- Limit time in bouncy chairs

Safer Sleep for premature babies The Lullaby Trust:

www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/premature-babies/



www.bliss.org.uk/parents/going-home/settling-in-at-home/safe-sleeping/



Some babies may require follow up

Your baby's consultant may follow up your baby to monitor their growth and development. Some babies may be referred to other health professionals, such as physiotherapists or speech and language therapists.

Medicines to take home

Your baby may be given medicines to take at home. These may include routine vitamins and supplements along with other medication that your baby may have been on prior to discharge.

You will know before going home what medicines if any, your baby will be having at home and how to give them safely. Staff are here to help you learn and to teach you so that when the time comes to take your baby home you will be able to give

your baby their medicines confidently. You will need to get a repeat prescription from your GP unless told otherwise. If you have any questions regarding additives or medication the following link may be useful: **The Royal United Hospital Medicines helpline:** www.ruh.nhs.uk/patients/medicines_helpline/index.asp/



If your baby was born prematurely

The long term effects of early birth can be difficult to predict in premature babies. Some very premature babies may be slow to reach early milestones, such as rolling, sitting and crawling, this does not necessarily indicate a long term problem. You will have been used to hearing the term 'corrected age', this is the age your baby would be if they had been born on their due date. When assessing development we will always expect progress for your baby's corrected age and not their actual age.

Crying

Crying is the most effective way your baby has of communicating their needs. All babies cry, and some cry a lot. Crying is your baby's way of telling you they need comfort and care.

Often you will know exactly why your baby is crying. But sometimes it can seem as if nothing will stop your baby crying. This can be an anxious time. However, you will gradually begin to recognise your baby's different crying patterns and, as you get to know your baby better, you will be able to anticipate his/her needs.

Sometimes it's easy to work out what they want, and sometimes it isn't. The most common reasons are:

- Hunger
- A wet or dirty nappy
- Tiredness or boredom
- Wanting a cuddle
- Wind
- Being too hot or cold

There may be times of the day when your baby tends to cry a lot and can't be comforted. Early evening is the most common time for this to happen. This can be hard for you as it's often the time when you're most tired and least able to cope.

Comforting your baby

There are things you can try to comfort your crying baby. If your baby cries inconsolably, the following may be useful. You will get to know your baby's personality and find out what works best for them and for you.



- If you're breastfeeding let your baby suckle at your breast.
- If you're bottle feeding give your baby a dummy. Some babies find their thumb instead.
- Hold your baby so that they're close to you. Move about gently, sway and dance, talk to them and sing.
- Rock your baby backwards and forwards in the pram, or go out for a walk or a drive. Lots of babies like to sleep in cars. Even if they wake up again when you stop, at least you'll have had a break.
- Find something for them to listen to or look at. This could be music on the radio, a CD, a rattle or a mobile above the cot.
- Try stroking your baby's back firmly and rhythmically, holding them against you or lying face downwards on your lap. You could also undress your baby and massage them with baby oil, gently and firmly. Talk soothingly as you do it and keep the room warm enough.
- Most parents have favourite ways to help their baby settle and if you have other children you may have already successfully used some of the above techniques.

Crying during feeds

Some babies cry and seem unsettled around the time of a feed. If you're breastfeeding, you may find that improving your baby's attachment helps them settle. You can go to a breastfeeding or drop-in centre and ask for help, or talk to your peer supporter or health visitor.

Changing the positioning of your baby during and after feeding may help prevent excessive wind and provide relief.

Some babies are sensitive to a noisy environment so try and reduce light, noise or too much environmental stimulation to see if it makes a difference.

You will soon become an expert at reading your babies cues which will help you to understand the different types of crying.

Keep a note of when the crying happens to see if there's a pattern. Sometimes, crying during feeds can be a symptom of reflux. Speak to your community nurse, GP or health visitor for more information and advice.

Never shake your baby

No matter how frustrated you feel, you must never shake your baby. Shaking moves their head violently, and can cause bleeding and brain damage.

Talk to a friend, your community nurse, health visitor or GP, or contact Cry-sis on 08451 228 669. They can put you in touch with other parents who've been in the same situation.

Cry-sis Support for parents with crying and sleepless babies:

www.cry-sis.org.uk



Oral Thrush

If your baby is not feeding as usual and you notice white spots or coating to your baby's mouth he/she may have oral thrush. This is a common and usually harmless fungal infection in the mouth. It mostly affects children under two years of age. Many cases of thrush clear up without needing treatment. However, if these symptoms are particularly troublesome or persistent, ask your community neonatal nurse or health visitor for advice or speak to your GP.

Thrush and advice for breastfeeding mothers

If your baby has oral thrush and you're breastfeeding, it's possible for your baby to pass a thrush infection to you. Symptoms of nipple thrush include: Pain while you're feeding your baby, this may continue after the feed is finished, cracked, flaky or sensitive nipples and areolas. You may be prescribed an antifungal cream.

Washing and bathing your baby

When your baby's skin is wet he/she may become cold very easily, even more so if he/ she is premature. Always wash/bath him/her in a warm draught-free place and have a towel close by to wrap and dry afterwards.

Helping my baby learn through play

Touching, moving, smelling, tasting, hearing and seeing... Your baby is learning really fast. They need your help and guidance! Please see separate leaflet: A better start for babies Helping my baby learn through play: 0-3 months.

Immunisations

Your baby will start their immunisation course when they are 8 weeks old from their birth date. For further information contact your health visitor.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-quick-guide-to-childhood-immunisation-for-the-parents-of-premature-babies>

Weaning your baby

Babies who are born prematurely or who have been unwell following birth often need extra time to start being able to feed by mouth. It is important to start weaning at the right time so your baby will learn to accept and enjoy a full range of tastes and textures.

BLISS

www.bliss.org.uk/parents/about-your-baby/feeding/weaning-your-premature-baby



First Steps Nutrition Trust - an independent public health nutrition charity that provides information and resources to support eating well from pre-conception to five years:

www.firststepsnutrition.org/



We wish you a very happy transition home with your baby and please come back to visit!



Additional Support:

Breastfeeding

Bath & Northeast Somerset

<https://bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk/childrens/health-visiting/>



www.nct.org.uk/local-activities-meetups/region-south-west-england/branch-bath-district/branch-postnatal-life-bath/breastfeeding-support-bath-district



www.healthysomerset.co.uk/breastfeeding/groups



www.thebabycafe.org/baby-cafes/frome-baby-cafe/



www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-pregnancy-breastfeeding



www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/



**The Breastfeeding Network:
Including taking medication
information**



www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/

**Association of Breastfeeding
Mothers:**

<https://abm.me.uk/>



La Laleche

www.laleche.org.uk



Twins and Multiple Births:

<https://twinstrust.org/>



Basic life support for babies and children:

www.bliss.org.uk/research-campaigns/research/research-achievements/resuscitation-video



Home oxygen:

<https://www.bliss.org.uk/parents/going-home/preparing-to-go-home/going-home-on-oxygen>



NCT Postnatal mental ill-health:

www.nct.org.uk/getinvolved/campaigns/hidden-half-campaign/



www.nct.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/hidden-half-campaign/hidden-half-stories

Bluebell: supporting families through depression and anxiety related to pregnancy and after birth:

www.bluebellcare.org/



Protecting your baby from cigarette smoke: Smoking cessation support:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/smoking-pregnant/



www.nhs.uk/smokefree

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