

# Parenting Time and Visitation Guidelines For the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



We have developed the following guidelines to ensure a safe and beneficial environment for your baby, visitor, and the staff caring for your infant; make your parenting time as comfortable for you and as valuable as possible for your baby; protect and respect your privacy and the privacy of others; and maintain appropriate infection control measures. Please remember these are guidelines, and exceptions can be made if special need arises. If this happens, we encourage you to speak to your baby's nurse, social worker or charge nurse on duty at the time, and we will consider your request.

**Contacting the NICU:** The NICU's telephone number is 202-476-5040. To ensure your infant's privacy, you will be given a special four digit code. You will need this code to visit or receive telephone information about your baby.  
**YOUR CODE IS:** \_\_\_\_\_.

For your baby's safety and protection please keep this code number confidential. We cannot be responsible for the privacy of your baby's information or incorrect information sharing if this number is shared with anyone other than the parents/guardians.

**Parent/Guardian Time:** Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit at anytime. We encourage you to join us during physicians' rounds, which take place every morning from 9:00 - 11:00 am. To respect the privacy of others and for infection control, we ask that you stay at your infant's bedside while visiting.

Sometimes a procedure needs to be done on your baby or a baby nearby that requires you to leave the bedside. As soon as you are able to return, a staff member from the NICU will let you know. During routine procedures we encourage you to stay at your baby's bedside to provide support.

**Other Visitors:** Parents/guardians may bring visitors over 12 years of age, including friends and relatives to see their child. Because of concerns with infection control and space, only three people at a time are allowed at the bedside. One of those individuals must be a parent/guardian. While parents/guardians may stay as long as they wish, other visitors will be asked to leave after 8 pm, which is the general hospital visitation policy.

Designated Visitors: To provide emotional support to parents/guardians, up to six designated visitors may be named by the parents/guardians and must be listed on the designated visitors form (found in this booklet).

- These visitors may visit without a parent present.
- Visiting hours for designated visitors are 10 am – 8 pm, which is the general hospital visitation policy.
- Designated visitors cannot bring other visitors.
- Medical information will be given only to parents/guardians; therefore, please understand you may be asked to step away during rounds.

Siblings: Siblings of the patient, who are at least 3 years old, may visit under adult supervision until 8 pm for up to 30 minutes at the discretion of the nursing staff. They may not be left alone in a patient's room or in the waiting rooms at any time. For the protection of all NICU infants, a nurse will take a brief medical history (such as temperature, and/or history of recent contact with contagious disease) to determine the safety and eligibility of sibling entrance into the unit.