

Transition to home

Taking your baby home from the Neonatal Critical Care Unit

When a baby needs care in the Neonatal Critical Care Unit (NCCU), one of the first questions parents usually ask is “when can I take my baby home?” Most preterm babies will be ready to go home around their due date, while other babies need to completely recover from their illness. Extremely preterm babies, or babies who have had a complex stay, may need to stay beyond their due date.

The following information can guide you on what you and your baby need to achieve in order to be confident of a safe transition from hospital to home. Your nurse/midwife will be able to discuss this information further with you.

Is your baby ready for home?

- Maintaining temperature in open cot (without any added heating)
- No longer requiring help to breathe (some babies may go home on oxygen)
- Not requiring monitoring with chest leads
- No longer having apnoea (pauses in breathing) events requiring assistance or medications
- Taking consecutive suck feeds during the day (not needing extra milk via feeding tube)
- Gaining weight (appropriate for age)
- Following sleeping baby safely guidelines (no longer needing to sleep on their tummy)

Parent goals

- Confident with caring for your baby – feeding, settling, bathing, and nappy changes.
- CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), choking management and sleeping baby safely education.
- Medication education (if required)
- Car seat installed.
- Home environment prepared.
- Any frozen breast milk taken home.
- Aware of follow up appointments.

Discharge planning

Our nursing/midwifery staff will discuss the best ways for you and your baby to transition to home – ‘rooming in’ or taking your baby directly home. Depending on your baby’s situation, rooming in offers nursing support from NCCU and may be of benefit to you.

Rooming in

Most of our families will have a period of rooming in prior to going home. This is where you spend the night in hospital with your baby on the postnatal floor. You will have support from the NCCU staff during your stay to ensure you are confident when going home. Please arrive at 10 am on the day of rooming in. Discharge time will be **10 am** the following day.

Straight home

If rooming in is not the best option for you or your family, you may be able to go home directly from NCCU. Discuss this option with your nurse/midwife. Discharge time is **10 am**.

Inter-hospital transfers

- If you live closer to, or were booked at another hospital with a nursery, your baby may be transferred to that hospital when appropriate.
- If your baby needs long term follow up by a paediatrician at a local hospital it is beneficial to be transferred and also to meet the team prior to taking your baby home.

Discharge information

- There is a variety of information relating to discharge available to you and your family before you take your baby home.
- Information on car seats, sleeping baby safely, breastfeeding, and child health services are available in the discharge packs given to you prior to discharge.
- Mater Mothers' website contains many online brochures about going home with your baby. Refer to www.matermothers.org.au

Parent education

- Your baby's nurse will demonstrate CPR and choking management to you in the pod close to your baby. This will take about 10 to 15 minutes and then you can practice on resuscitation dolls.
- The DVD about how to sleep baby safely takes approximately 10 minutes to watch.

Healthy hearing screen

- Health hearing screening is offered to all newborn babies to ensure early detection of permanent childhood hearing impairment.
- You will be asked to provide consent prior to the healthy hearing screen.
- The screen will be completed close to the day of discharge, and when your baby is taking mostly suck feeds during the day.
- Most preterm babies will require a follow up hearing screen close to their first birthday. This will be arranged by our audiology team.

Discharge medications

- Your baby's nurse will teach you how to give medications to your baby if required.
- A pharmacist will dispense medications prior to discharge and give further education closer to going home.

Child seat

- Always use a rear facing car seat suitable for newborns when baby is travelling in a vehicle.
- Ensure the car seat is installed before day of discharge and according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Kidsafe provide car seat installation services in Mater's Hancock Street Car Park. It is essential to book online for this service.

- Also refer to the [Kidsafe website](http://www.kidsafe.org.au) for further information about appropriate car seats.

Baby's red book

- A personal health record (or 'red book') is given to all babies born in Queensland.
- This will be kept in NCCU with your baby until discharge. You are welcome to access this book at any time to familiarise yourself with it.
- Record your baby's check-ups, growth patterns, and immunisation details.
- After discharge, keep this book with your baby and take to all appointments and health visits.

Immunisations

- The immunisation schedule is located at the back of your baby's red book. Any vaccinations received in hospital will be recorded here.
- Once discharged, your GP, paediatrician, or child health nurse will be able to administer the next vaccinations when due.

Community support

Emergency contact

- In an emergency or if you have **any** concerns about your baby's breathing, call **000** to have an ambulance arrive quickly.
- Your baby will be taken to the nearest hospital with a paediatric emergency.

GP

- It is recommended you make an appointment to see your GP 1 to 2 weeks post discharge from NCCU.
- Ensure we have the correct GP details.

Child health clinics

- With your consent, a referral will be made to your local community child health centre.
- Child health nurses are available at these centres to provide support to families with children aged from birth to 8 years. They can provide support with feeding and sleeping, drop in weigh centres and immunisation clinics, and other services.

Other useful contacts

- **13HEALTH** – 24 hour phone support. Ask for the child health nurse.
- Australian Breastfeeding Association. Phone: **1800 686 268**. 24 ours/7 days a week

Mater Homecare program

- If you live in Mater's catchment area you may qualify for home visits by a midwife.
- If you live out of the catchment area you may qualify for a telehealth consultation.

Follow up at Mater clinics

Also refer to the NCCU booklet for information about these services

Parent Support Centre

- GP, lactation consultants, child health nurses and psychologist services available.
- Available by appointment to all families who have had a baby at Mater. No referral is needed.
- For further details, ask for a brochure.

Short Term Follow-up Clinic (STFC)

- Public patients only
- Every Wednesday morning, located in the Salmon Building, level 4.
- Appointments will be arranged prior to discharge.

STFC phone clinic

- Public patients only
- Monday and Wednesday – the phone call will show as a 'private number'.

Retinopathy of Prematurity Clinic

- Every Wednesday morning (9 am), located in the Salmon Building, level 4.
- Appointment will be arranged prior to discharge.

Growth and Development Clinic

- Every Monday and Tuesday, located in the Salmon Building level 4.
- Appointment details will be posted to you.

Allied Health follow up

- If your baby requires follow up with the allied health team (e.g. physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, dietetics), your baby will be referred to Mater's allied health developmental screening clinics, if you live in Mater's catchment area. This will be arranged by the allied health team prior to discharge.
- If you live outside Mater's catchment area, your baby will be referred to your local hospital.

- Mater also provides face to face allied health appointments at the Mater Health & Wellness clinic. This is a private service available by appointment for all patients (fees apply). Discuss this option with the NCCU allied health team.

Private General Paediatric Clinic

Your private paediatrician will discuss follow up arrangements with you prior to discharge and let you know when to book an appointment at their clinic.

Specialist follow up

Queensland Children's Hospital – local hospital clinics

- If follow up is required at another hospital, a referral will be sent directly to them. You should receive information regarding the appointment in the mail.
- One of our doctors will discuss this with you prior to discharge

Post discharge survey

If you have consented for email communication, you will be sent a patient experience survey. The survey takes approximately 5 minutes to complete and we appreciate you taking the time to do this. Your responses will help us to know what we are doing well and what we need to do to improve our service. An email will be sent out to you within two weeks after your baby has been discharged home.

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