Parents Information Sheet
Visiting the Neonatal Unit: Autumn and Winter Visiting

During the autumn and winter months there is an increase in coughs, colds and flu in the community. For this reason, we limit the number of visitors who come into the NICU. We do this in order to protect our patients from infections; the less people who come into the unit from outside of the hospital, the lower the risk of infection being brought into the unit. These restrictions are part of our infection control management. There is more information at the end of this letter about infection control, please read this information and do ask any questions that you have by talking to the nurse in charge.

During the autumn and winter visiting is restricted to Parents and grandparents of the baby only
No brothers or sisters over the age of 5 are allowed to visit

Visiting your baby:
Parents are welcome to visit their babies in the unit as often as possible.

But we do have some times when we ask visitors to leave the nurseries;

- During ward rounds; to ensure confidentially for your baby and allow teaching to take place on ward rounds.
- During doctor and nursing handovers; to ensure confidentiality
- During X-Rays being taken; to protect visitors from exposure to x-ray
- During some emergency situations; to allow staff to move freely and quickly

Parents are welcome to visit at any time, however on the Special care side of the unit, in room 3 we ask that fathers visit with the following time frames from 08.00 – 22.00 hours. We have facilities in room 3 to allow mothers, whose baby’s are nearing discharge to sleep in the unit next to their baby, for this reason we restrict the end of visiting.

During the autumn and winter restrictions in place:

Grandparents of the baby: May visit daily between 14.00 – 18.00 hours
Children may not visit the unit

We understand that sometime there may be a request for another family member to visit, we will look at each situation and on some occasions we will allow other visitors to accompany a parent. As described there is a need to keep the number of different people coming into the unit to a minimum, therefore this will only be agreed in some circumstances. If someone other than a parent is to visit then we would ask that the unit staff are introduced to this person, so we are familiar with who they are this is part of our security and safety for the babies.

When you are new to the unit you may find that staff will ask you who you are and will not let you into the unit until they are clear who you are, this is not meant to be rude or the staff being difficult, it is aiming to ensure that the unit is secure.

CONTACT NUMBERS
NICU 0208-510-7096 0208-510-7069
SCBU 0208-510-7364 0208-510-5858
www.homerton.nhs.uk
Infection control:

We need your support with infection control in the unit;
Please read the hand washing and hygiene section of this sheet to help support us with infection control.

If you are unwell; it is important for parents to visit their baby but infection poses a great risk to a premature or sick baby. If a parent feels unwell they must telephone the nurse in charge before they visit, to discuss why they are unwell. There are some specific illnesses that are a risk to preterm and sick babies;

- Infectious diseases; - for example chickenpox, measles, and mumps; with these types of diseases, a person can have the infection and go on to infect others before they show any symptoms themselves. Therefore if parents (or other visitors) have come in contact with someone who is infected, it is important that they talk to the nurse in charge about the risks this poses to themselves and their baby. The decision to allow visiting will depend upon individual circumstances.

- Wound infections; If you have a wound following the birth of your baby and it becomes infected, please inform the nurse in charge as soon as you are aware of this, you should also inform your midwife if you have any concerns about how your wound is healing.

- Diarrhoea and vomiting; we ask that anyone who has suffered from gastric upset does not visit until 48 hours after they last have symptoms.

- If a parent is admitted to the hospital, other than on the maternity ward, we do not allow visiting to the unit of this parent, due to the risk issues of them being on a general adult ward environment.

Other infections we ask that you discuss with us before visiting;

- Skin Rashes or infections
- Cold sores
- Coughs and colds
- Flu like symptoms

Hand washing:

Hand hygiene is very important. When you first come into the unit from outside, please remove your outside coats or jackets. There are lockers in the parent’s sitting room for you to use, please ask for a padlock for a locker. You will be asked to pay a deposit on this padlock. As you leave the parents sitting room please use the sink in the corridor to wash your hands, use alcohol hand gel after you have washed your hands.

As you enter the nursery please use the alcohol gel again.
The nursing staff will advise you when you should wash your hands when caring for your baby and there is alcohol gel available in each nursery.
Remember that It’s OK to ASK our staff to clean their

Other information:

Information regarding babies will only be given to the baby’s parents.
If at any time you need help or want to ask a question please speak to the nurse in charge of the unit, this Sister or Senior Staff nurse will be able to answer most of your questions and can arrange for you to talk with someone else in the team if this is helpful.

We expect our staff to behave in a polite and courteous manner to parents/carers at all times. We expect that visitors show the same courtesy to staff. Disruptive visitors will be asked to leave the Unit.

Thank you for reading this information.
The NICU team.