

BRINGING BABY HOME

FROM THE NICU

CONGRATULATIONS!

It's a great day when your baby is strong and healthy enough to leave the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and go home. You are probably feeling excited. But, you also may feel a little nervous about taking care of your baby without the constant care of doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals in the hospital. Your NICU staff can be a great resource; they can help prepare you and guide you through this transition.



AT THE HOSPITAL

It's important to learn as much as you can about caring for your baby and your baby's condition before you leave the hospital. Here's a checklist of things to do as you prepare to bring your baby home.

- Be sure that the NICU staff schedules a discharge meeting with you to discuss your baby's medical needs. Get a copy of the discharge summary and be sure to ask the staff any questions that you might have. It is also a good idea to write down questions and concerns before the meeting to discuss with the staff.
- Learn what medications, if any, are to be given at home. Review them with your baby's healthcare team and learn how and when to administer them. Fill your baby's prescriptions before your baby leaves the hospital.
- Be sure that your baby has been added to your healthcare insurance policy.
- If you qualify for state or local services, or if your baby is going to be on Medicaid, be sure to fill out the paperwork and set this up while you are in the hospital.
- Social Security provides Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to certain infants born with a low birth weight whether or not they are premature. In most states, eligibility for SSI automatically entitles the child to Medicaid.
- Talk to the social worker if you are concerned about the support you have at home to help you care for the baby, including providing for basic needs — such as electricity, food, or phone service — after your baby leaves the hospital.
- Choose a healthcare provider for your baby to see after discharge. Talk with the pediatrician or neonatal or pediatric nurse practitioner before your baby leaves the hospital about the baby's first post-discharge visit, how often you should schedule exams, caring for your baby at home, and when to call your primary pediatric care provider.
- Make sure that your baby has received all required immunizations, also called vaccines or shots, (up to 2 months old).
- If your baby was born at 30 weeks' gestation or less, make sure he/she has an eye examination. Find out if a follow-up exam is required.
- Ask for the results of your baby's hearing tests and ask if follow-up exams are required.
- Ask about respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) season and whether or not your baby needs protection during RSV season.

For more information on SSI & Medicaid visit:

http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/368/~/ssi-benefits-for-premature-children

<http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/mcicaid.htm>



Helping Parents



Navigate The Premature Journey

PREPARE YOUR HOME & FAMILY FOR YOUR BABY'S ARRIVAL

Preparing for your baby's homecoming is important. Here's a checklist of things that you can do to prepare your home and your family to help keep your baby healthy and safe.



- Collect and get in order baby supplies, like diapers, blankets, sleepers, washcloths, a digital thermometer (not mercury), breast-feeding supplies, or formula and bottles if you cannot breastfeed your baby.
- Be sure that your home is clean. Your home should be free of dust, pet hairs, tobacco smoke, or other smells that may irritate the baby's breathing passages or eyes.
- Talk to your NICU staff about how to safely prepare a crib and about sleeping options for your baby.
- Prepare for an emergency — post 911 and your home address on all of your phones and program your baby's healthcare providers' numbers into your cell phones.
- Talk to your family and friends about precautions to protect your premature baby's health:
 - No one should smoke in your home or near your baby.
 - Teach everyone about good handwashing prior to touching the baby.
 - Ask visitors who are sick, or may be "coming down with something," to postpone their visits.
- Prepare your other children for the arrival of their new baby brother or sister and plan to spend special time alone with them after your baby comes home, to help them adjust.

BRINGING YOUR PREMATURE BABY HOME — THE CAR SEAT

Standard hospital policy and laws require that you have a car seat in the car before you take your baby home. Make sure that your car seat is properly installed; check the manufacturer's installation instructions.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that hospital staff observe and monitor infants born prematurely in their car seats before the infants leave the hospital.

Your healthcare provider may recommend the use of a car bed for very small and/or premature babies. They may need a car bed because of breathing problems or slowing of the heartbeat that could require that they be transported lying down.



Car beds should never be bought secondhand or used; most car beds are designed for one-baby use.

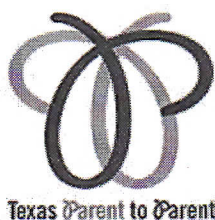
Your healthcare team will review the car seat with you and go over proper positioning for your baby.

Visit www.healthychildren.org for a guide on car seat safety.

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TEXAS PARENT TO PARENT
3710 Cedar Street, Box 12
Austin, TX 78705-1449
866/896-6001