

Bonding And Baby Care

Narrator

The NICU can seem a little overwhelming at first and some parents might feel a bit disconnected from their baby as they watch all the doctors and nurses working hard to take care of him or her. But it's very important that parents be involved in their baby's care in the NICU as soon as possible.

Jeannette Whitney, MD, Neonatologist

One of the things that we encourage parents to do when they first come in to see the baby the first time, is we encourage them to touch the baby, just constant touch, and also to talk to the baby. And so it also lets them bond with the baby, that they feel they can do something for the baby.

Narrator

To help your baby, the NICU strives to make the environment as calm as possible. To do that they'll keep the noise to a minimum so as not to over stimulate the baby.

Valencia Walker, MD

When the baby is able to sleep better and be more comfortable and peaceful, babies grow better. And the faster they grow, the faster they heal, the faster they go home. And I think it's really good for parents just to touch their child, to really make that connection and have the child feel real versus just a sick patient in the ICU. So it really becomes about helping the parents learn the child's personality and learning how to interact with them.

Narrator

The NICU staff will show you how you can be involved in the care of your baby as soon as your baby is stable.

Andrea Randall Shih, Mother

It's hard to be a mom in the NICU. But the nurses and doctors make it lot easier. I change her diaper. They let you give the baths and the bottles, and you can be here whenever you want to be here. So that really helps.

Jeannette Whitney, MD, Neonatologist

Kangaroo care is where we encourage family members, not just the mother, but the father or family members to place the baby with skin-to-skin. And that just helps the mom's milk production, and it also helps the babies developmentally. They do better as far as heart rate and respiratory rate, and just calming.

Mother

All the nurses are very loving. Some of the things they have you do when you're here is called kangaroo care, where you hold your baby skin to skin on your chest for at least an hour. It helps the baby to come more familiar with you and it calms them.

Erin Hamilton Spence, MD, Neonatologist

Dads doing kangaroo care makes a difference. They do grow better and they gain weight better over time.

Narrator

Breastfeeding is another great way to emotionally bond with your baby and moms should begin as soon as possible.

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Orly Elyashar, Mother

We're having a little skin to skin where she feels me, she listens to my heart rate. And I actually produce more milk when I have her smell close and near, and it's just a very nice bonding experience. I look forward to it every morning.

Narrator

Bonding with your baby is bound to be your most memorable experience during your baby's NICU stay. Touch your baby. Learn her cues. Discover her personality. And just love her up.

Sarah Cohen, Mother

It's a really cool experience. I think the minute she was born there was just an immediate bond that I didn't feel during pregnancy. It was just a little bit different. But everyday that I'm with her you start to learn their personality and their quirks. And I think it just becomes stronger and stronger every time that you're with the baby.