

Equipment in the NICU

apnea monitor — A machine that detects when your baby stops breathing for a few seconds. An alarm goes off to let NICU staff know your baby has stopped breathing.

arterial line — A thin tube that goes into your baby's artery to check his blood pressure and measure blood gases. An artery is a blood vessel that carries oxygen to all parts of your baby's body. Blood pressure is the force of blood that pushes against the walls of the arteries. Blood gases are acid, oxygen and carbon dioxide in your baby's blood.

bililights — Bright lights over a baby's incubator that treat jaundice. An incubator is a clear plastic bed that keeps your baby warm. Jaundice is when a baby's eyes and skin look yellow. A baby has jaundice when his liver isn't fully developed or isn't working. Treatment with bililights is also called phototherapy. Babies can have this treatment for 3 to 7 days.

blood pressure monitor — A machine connected to a small blood pressure cuff wrapped around your baby's arm or leg. The cuff takes your baby's blood pressure at regular times and displays it on a screen. Blood pressure is the force of blood that pushes against the walls of the arteries.

cardiopulmonary monitor — A machine that tracks your baby's heart and breathing rates. It's connected to your baby's chest with small sticky pads called leads. Information from the monitor displays on a screen and can be printed out. If your baby's heart or breathing rate becomes too fast or too slow, an alarm sounds.

central line — A small plastic tube that goes into a large blood vessel. Your baby gets medicine and fluids through the tube, and providers can

draw blood out through the tube. One kind of central line that's used a lot is called a peripherally inserted central catheter (also called a PICC line).

continuous positive airway pressure (also called CPAP) — A machine that sends air and oxygen to your baby's lungs through small tubes in his nose or windpipe (also called trachea).

cooling blanket or cap — A blanket or cap used to lower your baby's body temperature. They may help reduce or prevent problems that can happen if your baby's brain doesn't get enough oxygen. The blanket or cap can cool your baby's brain and body to about 92 F (33.5 C). Your baby may get a cooling blanket or cap within about 6 hours of birth and can use it for up to 3 days. After that, your baby is slowly warmed to a normal body temperature of 98.6 F (37 C) by increasing the temperature in the incubator.

endotracheal tube — A small plastic tube that goes into a baby's nose or mouth and down to the windpipe (also called trachea) that sends air and oxygen to the lungs. The tube is attached to a machine called a mechanical ventilator to help your baby breathe.

extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (also called ECMO) — A machine that takes blood out of your baby's body, puts oxygen into the blood and then sends the blood back into the body.

gastrostomy tube (also called g-tube or gastric feeding tube) — A tube that goes into your baby's stomach for feeding. Liquids go through the tube to feed your baby. The tube is used for babies who can't take food by mouth and need long-term help with feeding.

high-frequency ventilator — A machine that breathes for your baby at a faster rate than other ventilators. Oscillating and jet ventilators are examples of high-frequency ventilators.

incubator — A clear plastic bed that helps keep your baby warm. You can touch your baby through holes (also called ports) in the sides of the incubator. Kinds of incubators are Giraffe® and Isolette®.

intravenous line (also called IV) — A tube inserted with a needle into your baby's vein. A vein is a blood vessel that brings blood back to the heart. Your baby can get fluids, medicine and blood through an IV.

mechanical ventilator — A machine that helps your baby breathe or breathes for him when he's not breathing on his own. It works by pushing warm air and oxygen into the lungs through a breathing tube called an endotracheal tube. The provider sets the amount of oxygen, air pressure and number of breaths per minute for your baby.

nasal cannula — Small plastic tubes that go into your baby's nose. Air and oxygen go through the tubes into your baby's lungs.

nasogastric tube (also called NG tube) — A feeding tube that goes through your baby's nose, down the esophagus and into the stomach. The esophagus is the tube in your baby's body that carries food from the throat to the stomach. Your baby can get breast milk, formula and medicine through the tube. When your baby is fed breast milk or formula through an NG tube, it's called gavage feeding.

orogastric tube (also called OG tube) — A feeding tube that goes in your baby's mouth, down the esophagus and into the stomach. The esophagus is the tube in your baby's body that carries food from the throat to the stomach. Your baby can get breast milk, formula and medicine

through an OG tube. When a baby is fed breast milk or formula through an OG tube, it's called gavage feeding.

oxygen hood — A clear plastic box that fits over a baby's head and gives him oxygen. Providers use it with babies who can breathe on their own but still need some extra oxygen.

pulse oximeter (also called a pulse ox) — A small device wrapped around your baby's foot or hand that measures the oxygen in her blood. It doesn't cause your baby any pain. It helps providers know if your baby needs more or less oxygen.

radiant warmer — An open bed with overhead heating to help keep your baby warm. Providers may use a warmer instead of an incubator if your baby needs to be handled a lot. An incubator is a clear plastic bed that helps keep your baby warm.

tracheostomy tube — A curved plastic tube that goes in your baby's windpipe (also called trachea) through a hole made in your baby's neck. The trachea is part of the airway system that takes air to the lungs. Your baby breathes through the tube instead of his nose and mouth. The tube doesn't go into your baby's lungs.

umbilical catheter — A thin tube that goes into the arteries in your baby's umbilical cord after the cord is cut after birth. Providers can give fluids, blood, medicine and nutrients, like vitamins and minerals, to your baby through the tube. They also use the tube to take blood from your baby. A small attachment to the tube lets providers check your baby's blood pressure. Blood pressure is the force of blood that pushes against the walls of the arteries.

urinary catheter — A thin tube that goes through the opening where urine passes out of your baby's body and into his bladder. Providers use it to collect urine for testing.