

Visiting NICU when you or a family member are sick

Information for parents



JUST BRING HUGS INTO THE HOSPITAL, NOT BUGS!

Introduction

This information is to protect your baby and to inform parents of the risk that infections from visitors to the newborn services can cause.

- The babies in the newborn service are already unwell and/or premature so it is very important to keep them safe from any infectious illness.
- We would like to stop any one you know who is sick from visiting your baby.
- Anyone who has been in contact with somebody with an infectious disease should also stay away as they could pass the infection to the babies, even if they do not feel sick themselves.
- Premature and sick babies are at far greater risk than a healthy term baby, as they are less able to fight off infection.

Which infectious diseases can cause problems?

Any infectious disease can make a baby sick. Common communicable infections that can cause harm include:

- Coughs, colds, flu
- Cold sores (Herpes)
- Respiratory viruses
- Diarrhoea (e.g. Rotovirus)
- Chickenpox

Any one with these infections should notify the Newborn unit to check if they can visit

What are the symptoms of an infectious disease?

- Fever
- Feeling unwell
- Lacking in energy
- Rashes
- Sores
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

These are generally common symptoms of infectious diseases

Check with staff if you have any of the above symptoms

Chickenpox

A virus such as chickenpox has an incubation period. This is the time between your contact with a person who has the virus and getting sick yourself. The usual incubation period from being exposed and getting sick is 10 – 21 days.

People are infectious from 1 – 2 days before the spots appear. Spots can appear on the scalp, face, body, arms, legs and inside the mouth. With chickenpox the spots will become blisters which form hard scabs.

Siblings

If you have other children please wait until they have recovered from any sickness or infections before allowing them to visit your new baby.

Please note that sick children cannot be left in the sibling's playroom because of the risk of passing on infection to others.

Hospital Infection Control Golden Rules

- Always wash your hands before touching or handling your baby (this is also the rule for all visitors)
- Do not visit if you are sick, coughing or sneezing
- Do not visit if you have been in contact with someone who has an infectious disease
- Tell staff if a family member or someone you have been into contact with has an infectious disease
- Don't touch or handle other babies in the newborn unit

Further Information

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or want more information about infectious diseases ask the nurse or doctor caring for your baby.

A range of health information is also available from the Women's Health Information Unit on Level 9 of Auckland City Hospital Mon - Fri 9am-7pm (ph 307-4949 ext 25678 or HIWS@adhb.govt.nz). In addition to written information the Unit provides access to computer research databases and the internet.