
Stage: Post birth and NICU

Questions to ask medical professionals

- Who are the different healthcare professionals involved in my child's care and what are their roles?
- How, and how often will we be updated on our child's condition and progress?
- How long is our hospital stay likely to be?
- Do you use ECMO? Under what circumstances will it be used?
- What are the potential treatments that will be used (ventilators, drugs etc.)? What are the risks associated with these?
- Will my baby be in any pain? What medicines are given to the baby to ensure they are pain-free?
- Will my baby have to be weaned off medications? What is this process like and is it painful for my baby?
- How do you decide when to perform surgery? When will you know if surgery will go ahead?
- How long will you give my baby before deciding they are/are not a candidate for surgery?
- What exactly will the surgeon do during surgery?
- What can go wrong during surgery?
- What can go wrong following surgery?
- How long will surgery take?
- Up until what stage can I stay with my child before they are taken in to surgery?
- How long do I have to wait after surgery to see my child?
- When will my baby be taken off the breathing machine and what does this process look like?
- What are the steps towards being able to feed my baby (breast or bottle)? What does this process look like?
- How can I keep up my breastmilk supply if I am not able to feed my baby (if you want to breastfeed)? Do you have staff that can help me with this? How much breastmilk can be stored at the hospital?
- If my baby is recovering well, will they be moved from NICU to a ward? When will this take place?
- What happens if my baby is not doing well and is struggling to thrive?
- Under what conditions will doctors say there is nothing more they can do for our baby? What does this process look like and how much information will you give us?
- Can my other children visit their sibling in the NICU?
- Can extended family or friends visit our child in the NICU?

Advice from parents

- Talk to the nurses and allied health staff. They are the ones who will deal with you on a daily basis and for years to come.
- Ask the nurses to explain the equipment and all the numbers and charts. You will probably need them to explain it a few times, but I found it helpful being able to know what was going on.