

**A newsletter for  
Sunnybrook NICU  
families and their  
friends**

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## Welcome to Sunnybrook!

*A message for you from Graduate Families of the NICU at Sunnybrook and the Family Advisory Committee (FAC):*

Congratulations on the birth of your baby or babies, and welcome to a new season at Sunnybrook.

As winter melts away and bad weather turns into good (we hope!), some of our worries

over colds and flu recede and we look forward to the sunshine.

It can be hard, though, to spend hours cooped up in the NICU when the sun is shining outside, and it can be hard to hear about everyone's summer plans when you know you'll be spending yours at the hospital or at home with your new baby.

While it is good for you to be present in the hospital, it's also important for you to take breaks for yourself. There are beautiful gardens and trails around Sunnybrook; we urge you to get outside and take advantage of these. Babies need healthy, happy families to take care of them.

**We wish the best for you and your family.**

## The Premie Picnic: June 12

Every year, graduate families and staff members gather together to celebrate our wonderful children.

For families, it's a chance to see other parents and staff members again. For staff, it's a chance to see what these little bundles look like years later. And for the kids? Well, it's a chance to have a picnic, enjoy yourself and get your

face painted. As it should be.

This year's picnic will be from 12 to 4 pm on Sunday, June 12, in McLean House Park which is close by Sunnybrook. It will go on rain or shine, although we have put in a request for sun. For updates, visit the Sunnybrook NICU Family Advisory Committee page on Facebook. We provide

food and fun stuff to do; we ask you to bring picnic blankets or lawn chairs if you like to sit. We've got the bouncy castle booked, we've got crafts planned and we've invited some talented musicians along for entertainment. Hope to see you there!

Something you'd like to see in the newsletter?

We would love to hear from you!

Please email ideas to Kate, the Parent Coordinator, at [kate.robson@sunnybrook.ca](mailto:kate.robson@sunnybrook.ca), or just let me know when you see me in the unit. I'm in Monday, Wednesday and Thursday or by appointment.

Thank you to Rob Patrick for the use of his photo.

*"A pharmacist came to one of the Thursday parent sessions and let us taste our babies' medicines. Some of them were okay, like the Vitamin D and the caffeine. Some were pretty nasty! It was a great idea and a fun way of learning. Thank you Julie!"*

*- a mom of 27 week twins*

## A message from our Pharmacy Team

Hello Parents and Families!

The NICU Clinical Pharmacists take great pride in providing safe medication therapy to your baby. We are Carla, Dolores, Julie and Katrina.

Our role is quite different from many other pharmacists. We are trained specifically to ensure that your baby receives the most appropriate and safe medication therapy while in the NICU.

We enjoy the opportunity to meet each of you. We are available to you every day in the NICU if you have any questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to speak with us regarding your baby's medications, questions about immunizations, items to stock in your medicine cabinet for the baby, how best to give medications at home (including masking the awful tastes!), the best bum creams, best choices for sunscreen, etc. We welcome any

question. Our office is M4-217.

We also have a dedicated certified pharmacy technician staff: Ali, Annalisa, Cory, Guia, Gurmel, Jennifer, Raj, Randa and Renata. They prepare all of the medications and IV solutions for your baby using their advanced technical skills. We work together to ensure that your baby receives medications in the safest manner possible.

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## Hand Hygiene for Safety

What's the most important thing you can do to keep your baby safe in the NICU?

**Clean your hands and ask those around you to do the same.**

Use soap and water after using the bathroom or any time you have visible soil (such as milk, stool or mucous) on your hands. Don't rush through washing your hands; take time to clean fingers, wrists and backs of hands thoroughly and then dry well.

You can use alcohol hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly soiled. Use sanitizer before and after touching your baby, touching your face, touching your hair, using a phone, using a pen/pencil, or using a computer.

It's also important to know that germs can hide under rings, watches, bracelets and artificial nails. That is why we ask you to take off hand and arm jewelry (even wedding rings) and to remove artificial nails.

If you find your hands are starting to get sore or cracked, or if you have any other questions about safety and hand hygiene, ask a Staff Nurse.

Working together is the best way to keep all of us safe. You should always feel comfortable asking anyone coming to see your baby, "Have you washed your hands?"



## Upcoming Events

**Mother's Day:** On May 5, the Thursday before Mother's Day, we will be hosting a special scrapbooking session in the Parent Lounge. Bring photos and we'll provide the rest (including sweet treats for moms, dads and other family members).

**Pedal For Preemies:** On Saturday May 28 the Linden Fund will host the Pedal for Preemies fundraising event. You'll find more info on pg 5 of the newsletter

**Father's Day:** On Thursday June 16 we'll have a treats and crafts session in the Parent Lounge; we'll make cards and keepsakes and celebrate our wonderful dads.

**Canada Day:** On Friday, July 1, celebrate Canada Day with us in the Parent Lounge. Family members are welcome to join the party!



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## Meet our Dietitians

Dietitians are integral members of your baby's care team. Our job is to help your baby grow and build up stores of nutrients like iron. Early on, before your baby is getting much milk, we plan for and optimize the IV nutrition in the form on TPN (Total Parenteral Nutrition). These fluids contain protein, fat, sugar, vitamins, minerals and fat. Once your baby is tolerating milk feeds, we focus on optimizing your baby's intake of nutrients coming from breastmilk or formula. We often recommend

adding a powder to breastmilk called Human Milk Fortifier. We want to make sure you know that even when we add things into your breastmilk it doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with your milk. It is just that premature babies grow so quickly that their needs for energy, protein, calcium and phosphorus are very high. After you leave the hospital, we are also available to answer any nutrition questions that you may have. Some babies need

ongoing nutrition care after going home. You may also see or talk to us after discharge and when you come to the Follow-up Clinic We would be happy to sit down and show you your baby's growth chart and talk to you about their nutrition. If you'd like to meet one of the dietitians, Andrea, Sue or Rena, ask your nurse, or come by our office, in Room 336.

*Kate says, "I phoned the dietitians a few times after discharge and got great advice from them. Don't feel shy about taking advantage of all they have to offer!"*

## Chaplains and Spiritual Care at Sunnybrook

As part of the healthcare team, our professional spiritual care providers - accountable to their own faith groups - work in an interfaith capacity with people from all faith traditions as well as those who do not belong to any faith tradition.

They can provide support to families not only in times of crisis, but also in times of celebration. Chaplains have helped NICU families with baptisms, naming rituals, and even personalized ceremonies to celebrate leaving the NICU for home.

Some of the chaplains have experience with stress-managing techniques like meditation. The on-call chaplain is available 24 hours a day by request through a nurse, a social worker or by dialing 416-480-4244 and asking to speak to the on-call chaplain.

There are also many spiritual spaces at Sunnybrook. On the Ground Floor in E Wing there is an interfaith chapel, a synagogue, a Muslim prayer room and a Roman Catholic Chapel.



## Our Milestones Program

There are many exciting milestones to be marked in the NICU. When our babies start using CPAP, go to the breast for the first time, or get their first Kangaroo Cuddle, (and these are just some of many important NICU moments) we celebrate!

For years, we gave babies a special certificate when they

got to 1 kilo. One of our nurses was inspired by the old Kilo Club certificates, and she enlisted one of our graduate moms who is a gifted graphic designer.

The result? Not only did we get a fancy new Kilo Club certificate, but we got milestone certificates for many other important moments.

So if you're wondering where those lovely certificates came from, they are the product of a unique collaboration between nursing staff and parents. We hope you and your family enjoy them!

## Did you know?

- There's a Druxy's in the Odette Cancer Centre? Warning: long lines at lunch time.
- There is a branch of the Toronto Public Library in the Veterans Wing? You can order books on the library website and pick them up there!
- A weekly parking pass is available from Parking Services? It

costs \$50 and if you've already paid for some parking they will give you credit for some of those receipts.

- You should save all your receipts related to your hospital stay (including meals, parking, and mileage if you live far away)? You can claim them on your taxes as health care expenses.

- We have a pediatric physiotherapist on staff? If you'd like to meet her and learn all about movement and babies, let your nurse know you would like to meet with Maureen.

- In summer you can get ice cream at Sunny's in the Veterans Wing?

- A social worker can help you sort through

EI issues and short-term housing options if you're far from home? Let your nurse know if you'd like to meet with a Social Worker.

- There is a Facebook group for the Sunnybrook NICU Family Advisory Committee? We'd love for you to join.

## A message from the Linden Fund

*The Linden Fund is a parent-founded charity that supports NICUs in Ontario.*

The Linden Fund is proud to invite you to join our fourth annual Pedal for Premies Walk/Run Bike-a-thon on Saturday, May 28th, 2011. You will have the opportunity

to stroll, run or bike your way through beautiful and scenic High Park in Toronto. Choose either 1K, 5K or challenge yourself to a 10K run or walk with your children on bikes, in strollers or wagons. Along your way you will enjoy the company of other individuals who have been directly

or or indirectly affected by prematurity as well as health care professionals and other like minded supporters.

Join us to walk in memory, walk in hope, walk to make a big difference in tiny lives.

We invite you to sign up as an individual, team,

or volunteer. Together we can continue to make a big difference in tiny lives.

Please visit our website at [www.thelindenfund.com](http://www.thelindenfund.com) or email [grousselle@thelindenfund.com](mailto:grousselle@thelindenfund.com)

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## All about tummy time



Tummy time is when we put babies on their tummies when they are awake. Babies need supervised tummy time several times a day because:

- It helps babies develop appropriately
- It protects their heads from getting flat spots
- It strengthens the muscles of a baby's head, neck and arms.

At first, starting at about 38 weeks corrected age, you can do just a short bit of tummy time at each diaper change. As your baby grows, you can do more.

If you'd like to learn more, ask your nurse for guidance or request a meeting with Maureen Luther, our pediatric physiotherapist.

You don't need gadgets, pillows or toys, since your baby's favourite toy is you. You can have a lot of fun with tummy time, and remember that when you do it that you're helping your baby grow stronger.

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## Exciting research shows benefits of skin-to-skin holding

Earlier this Spring, internationally renowned neonatologist Dr. Robert White came to Toronto to do "Grand Rounds" with staff members from Sunnybrook, Sick Kids and Mount Sinai.

Dr. White has done innovative research in NICU design, and is a big proponent of the single room design that we have now at Sunnybrook. What was most

interesting about his presentation, though, was his explanation of the many benefits of skin-to-skin holding (also known as Kangaroo Care).

Simply put, when parents hold babies, babies get appropriate stimulation that encourages healthy brain development. They stay as warm as they would in an incubator, and the natural sensory environment

that a parent provides leads to better long-term outcomes.

What does this mean to you? We encourage you to hold your baby whenever you can, for as long as you can. Talk with your nurse about when you can start holding, and work with her or him and the medical team to make plans to facilitate holding. Your touch is magic for your baby!

## Breast pumping Q&A

Ah, the pump! There's nothing quite like the feeling of hooking yourself up to a machine 8 to 10 times a day to get milk for your baby. It's something that all moms of NICU babies can bond over ... a very unique experience, to say the least!

We asked our lactation consultant, Luisa for some pumping tips.

- Don't worry if it takes a few days to get started. Once you move from hand expression to using the pump, you might see your production stall. That's very normal. It can take up to five or six days for your milk to come in. Keep pumping regularly and record how much you're getting.
- Pumping should **never** be painful or uncomfortable!
- If you'd like to bump up milk production, try pumping more frequently. For example, pump every 2 hours during the day rather than every 3. It's better to pump more frequently rather than for longer sessions.
- "Prime" the pump. Always drink a glass or two of water before pumping.
- You can make a hands-free pumping bra by cutting holes in an old sports bra.
- Avoid wearing underwire bras; the pressure can encourage blockages.
- Another way of getting milk flowing is to massage before you pump, which can stimulate the "let down" of the milk.
- Warm compresses can help ease blockages and get milk moving.
- Warm water in a diaper can be effective; some moms use a sock filled with rice that they heat in a microwave.
- You can pump either in your baby's room or in the pump room (for women only). The pump room is a good place to connect with other moms. You can also leave your requests for more breast kits in the pump room.
- The most important tip is if you've got any questions or concerns, talk to Luisa. You can ask your nurse to call her, or you can call her directly at 416-480-6100 x 87814.

And remember ... pumping can be challenging, but the rewards are great. The breast milk you make for your baby is the best gift you can give!



Your new "breast friend"

## What is Patient & Family Centred Care?

### Sunnybrook NICU

Central Desk Phone:  
416-480-6055  
Location: M Wing,  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Bayview Campus

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Parent Coordinator:  
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The model of care offered in the NICU at Sunnybrook is known as "Patient and Family Centred Care" (or P&FCC). It means that you and your baby/babies are at the centre of the circle of care. Families are a key part of the care team and should always be treated as

such. That is why NICU staff make a point of telling families you are not visitors – you have a right to be here.

The core concepts of P&FCC are:

- Respect and Dignity
- Information Sharing
- Participation
- Collaboration

We want you to be a part of the team, and we will help you in whatever way we can.

To learn more about Patient and Family Centred Care, visit the Institute for Patient and Family-Centred Care at <http://ipfcc.org>.