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a perinatal grief support program

NICU Vocabulary

Adjusted/Corrected Age

The age a premature baby would be if born on their due date.

Anemia

A low number of red blood cells in the blood. NICU babies are not always able to make red blood cells quickly enough to replace the ones lost when blood is taken for testing.

Antepartum

Before birth.

Antibiotics

A type of medication used to treat a suspected or actual bacterial infection. Until the specific bacterium is identified, babies receive combination antibiotics to treat them for the most "common" types of infections.

Apgar Score

A number given at one and five minutes of age that measures baby's condition based on heart rate, breathing, muscle tone, activity level, and color.

Apnea

Brief lapses in breathing or cessation of breathing, which may be associated with prematurity ("apnea of prematurity"), obstructions in the airway ("obstructive apnea"), or brain anomalies ("central apnea").

Artery

Blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood away from the heart and

lungs to the body's organs and tissues. Arteries are also the blood vessels that are used to feel the pulse or measure the body's blood pressure.

Aspirate

(Noun) Breastmilk or formula left in baby's stomach from the previous feeding. Assessing the amount of aspirate helps guide the nurse when deciding whether baby is ready to have the feeding volume increased.

Aspiration

(Verb) The direct result of inhaling any foreign matter into the lungs.

Atelectasis

A collapsed condition in a part of the lungs.

Atrial Septal Defect

A congenital condition in which there is a hole between the two upper chambers (atria) of the heart.

Bagging

A way to give babies oxygen and/or extra breaths using an airfilled bag.

Bilirubin

A product of the breakdown of red blood cells, filtered out of the blood by the liver. The liver does not filter as well as it should, causing bilirubin to build up in the blood resulting in jaundice (a yellow/ orange skin hue).

Blood Gas

A blood sample measuring the level of oxygen, carbon dioxide and acid (pH) in the blood. Measures how well a baby is ventilating or breathing.

Blood Pressure

A measure of the force of blood moving through blood vessels. Taken using a cuff around baby's arm or leg or monitored using a special transducer connected to the umbilical artery catheter (UAC) inserted into the umbilical cord.

Bradycardia (Brady)

Any decrease in baby's heart rate below 100 beats per minute that lasts longer than 15 seconds and requires stimulation to correct.

Brain Bleed

Bleeding or hemorrhaging into some part of the brain.

Breast Pump

A machine used by nursing mothers to express milk from their breasts.

Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia (BPD)

Broncho (air passages from trachea to lungs) pulmonary (in the lungs) dys (bad) plasia (formation). Develops after a premature baby receives breathing assistance (through a mechanical ventilator or getting (oxygen) for a period of time.

The assistance could damage their already fragile lungs. It can also form after infection or from congenital conditions.

Brochoscopy

A thin tube passed through the nose or mouth, down the throat, and into the lungs that allows visualization of lungs and air passages.

Caffeine

A stimulant drug used in the treatment of apnea.

Cannula

A method of delivering oxygen. (A thin flexible tube goes over baby's face and head, connected to an oxygen source. A flow meter regulates the amount of oxygen that is given through two prongs that extend from the tube into baby's nostrils.)

Cardiology

The branch of medicine dealing with the heart and circulation.

Carbon Dioxide

The gas we breathe out as a waste product.

Catheter

A plastic tube to put fluids into or to remove them from the body.

Complete Blood Count (CBC)

A blood test done for several reasons, including to determine if an in-

fection may be present and to see whether baby is anemic. Checks levels of white and red blood cells, hemoglobin, platelets, etc.

Central Line

A special IV catheter used to give fluid, medication, or nutrition to baby; includes long lines, PICCs, and UVCs. It can stay in for an extended time, if needed.

Central Nervous System (CNS)

The brain and spinal cord.

Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF)

Fluid produced in the ventricles of the brain that circulates around the brain and spinal column.

Chest Physical Therapy (Postural Drainage)

A way to clear lung secretions and reduce respiratory support using positioning, vibration and suction.

Chest Tube

A tube surgically inserted through baby's chest wall into the space around the lungs to reopen a partially or totally collapsed lung.

Coarctation of the Aorta

A narrowing of part of the aorta connecting the heart to the rest of the body, so blood doesn't flow evenly. May require surgery or sometimes, can be widened by inflating a balloon on the tip of a catheter inserted through an artery.

Colostrum

Breastmilk produced in late pregnancy or in the first three to five days after delivery (This milk is usually yellowish in color and is especially rich in nutrients and antibodies.)

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

A type of respiratory support used to deliver constant air pressure into baby's nose, which helps the air sacs in the lungs stay open and helps prevent apnea.

Cyanosis

Dusky, bluish color of the skin, lips, and nail beds caused by too little oxygen in the blood.

Desaturation (DESATS)

When the oxygen level in the blood falls below the set value on the saturation monitor. Acceptable levels of oxygen vary depending upon baby's age, and the monitor alarm limits are set accordingly.

Diaphragmatic Hernia

A weakness of the diaphragm that allows the bowel to enter the chest cavity, resulting in under development of the lung.

DIP

When the heart rate drops below 100 beats per minute and comes up quickly without requiring any stimulation.

Donor Human Breastmilk

Expressed breastmilk donated by healthy mothers. Milk is pasteurized, making it safe, and is used as the preferred alternative to formula feeding in the very premature baby until a mother's own milk is available.

Double Outlet Right Ventricle

A congenital condition in which both the pulmonary artery and the aorta connect to the right ventricle of the heart.

DX

Medical abbreviation for diagnosis.

Expressed Breast Milk (EBM)

Milk mothers express using a breast pump or hand expression. Milk can be used soon after pumped or can be frozen and saved for later use.

EKG

A machine that is attached to baby's chest to do a printed read-out of the heart's electrical activity (heartbeat). This may be done when a murmur is heard.

Echocardiogram

An ultrasound of the heart, usually performed by the cardiologist.

Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO)

A type of life support that uses a machine to add oxygen to the blood to help baby's heart and/or lungs.

Edema

Also known as "puffiness"; this is swelling due to extra fluid under the skin.

Electroencephalogram (EEG)

A tracing of the electrical impulses of the brain.

Electrocardiogram (EKG)

A tracing of the heart's electrical activity.

Electrodes

Small pads taped to baby's chest, arms or legs connected to a monitor to measure the heart and breathing rates. Also, can be at-tached to the head to measure brain waves/ activity.

Electrolytes

The measurement of sodium, potassium, and/or chloride in baby's blood. The results of this test help medical staff treat baby.

Endotracheal Tube (ETT)

A soft plastic tube placed into baby's mouth or nose and into the windpipe (trachea) to help with breathing.

Extubation

Removal of the endotracheal tube.

Fontanel

The "soft spot" on the top of the baby's head between the un-joined sections of the skull.

Fortifier

A powdered substance added to breast milk to give it extra calories and minerals such as calcium and phosphorous.

Full-term (FT)

An infant born between the 38th and 42nd weeks of gestation.

Gastrostomy Tube/Button (G-Tube)

A tube or opening into the stomach through the abdominal wall. Allows for prolonged feeding of infants who cannot feed orally.

Gastroesophageal Reflux

Often referred to as "GE reflux," or just "reflux," this is a condition in which food in the stomach comes back up into the esophagus, and sometimes all the way out of the mouth. It is similar to heartburn in adults.

Gavage

Feeding by a tube passed through the mouth into the stomach.

Gestational Age

The number of weeks a woman is pregnant when baby is born.

Glucose

A type of sugar in the blood. Different types of glucose monitoring are done, but the most common is done using a glucometer at bedside.

Glycerin Tip

Also known as a "silver bullet"; because of its packaging. Occasionally a very small tip of a glycerin suppository is used to help babies pass stool.

Heart Monitor

This monitor shows the heartbeat on a special computer screen. Three gelled electrodes (leads) sit on baby's skin. An alarm rings if the readings are not within the normal limits. False alarms are common and usually happen when baby wiggles or a lead falls off.

Heel Stick

A method of getting blood from baby's heel.

Hematocrit

The concentration of red cells in the blood.

Hernia

A weakness in the abdominal wall that allows a portion of the intestines to protrude into the umbilical or inguinal area.

Hyperbilirubinemia

Excess bilirubin in the blood; a condition common in newborns.

Hypercalcemia

An excess amount of calcium in the blood.

Hypercapnia (Hypercarbia)

An excess of carbon dioxide in the bloodstream.

Hyperglycemia

Abnormally high sugar levels in the blood.

Hyperkalemia

Excess amounts of potassium in the blood.

Hypernatremia

Excessive amounts of sodium in the blood.

Hypertension

High blood pressure.

Hyperthermia

Abnormally high body temperature.

Hyperventilation

An ultrasound of the heart, usually performed by the cardiologist.

Hypocalcemia

Abnormally low levels of calcium in the blood.

Hypoglycemia

Low blood sugar.

Hypokalemia

Too little potassium in the blood.

Hyponatremia

Too little sodium in the blood.

Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome

A congenital condition in which the left side of the heart is underdeveloped.

Hypotension

Abnormally low blood pressure.

Hypothermia

Low body temperature; a problem for low-birth-weight premature babies.

Hypotonia

Deficient muscle tone.

Hypovolemia

An abnormally low volume of blood in the body.

Hypoxemia

Lack of oxygen in the blood.

I and O

Abbreviation for “input and output.” (The amount of fluids given by oral feedings or by IV, and the amount of fluid excreted in the urine or stools, as well as blood removed for testing, over a given period of time.)

Infiltrated

An IV that is no longer in the vein, so fluid builds up in the tissue instead. The IV must be restarted.

Incubator

A heated and humidified bed for babies in the NICU, often called by the manufacturer's name.

Infusion Pump

A pump that is attached to an IV line to give fluids to baby in tiny, carefully measured amounts.

Intracranial Hemorrhage (ICH)

Bleeding in or around the brain.

Intravenous (IV)

A small catheter placed a short distance into a vein to provide fluid and/or medications. IV's can be in the scalp, hands, arms, legs, or feet. These sites are rotated regularly.

Intraventricular Hemorrhage (IVH)

Bleeding into fluid-filled areas (ventricles) surrounded by the brain.

Intubate/Intubation

The process of inserting an endotracheal tube (ETT) to provide ventilation to baby.

Isolette (Incubator)

A transparent plastic box that has a heating system to keep premature babies warm. (Isolettes used to be called incubators.)

Jaundice (Hyperbilirubinemia)

The yellow color seen in the skin usually during the first 2 weeks of life, due to the buildup of broken-down blood cells.

Kangaroo Care

Holding infant skin-to-skin against an adult. Another's body heat help regulate baby's body temperature, which is necessary because many premature babies have less body fat to regulate their own temperatures.

Lab Work

This is a collective term for any blood samples that baby may need drawn.

Lactation

Production of milk by the breasts.

Lanugo

Fine hair that covers the body of a fetus and some premature babies.

Laryngomalacia/Tracheomalacia

A softening of the vocal cords or the airway, making them floppy enough to interfere with breathing.

Laryngoscope

A tool with a long, lighted, hollow metal tube and handle; used when a tube is inserted to see the vocal cords and guide the tube between them.

Lipids

A white, high calorie, fat solution that is delivered by IV or mixed in with infant's milk/formula.

Low Flow

Refers to one of the many ways to deliver oxygen and/or air to babies.

Long Line (PICC)

A long intravenous line placed further into a large vein using sterile technique. This line can be left in for long periods of time.

Lumbar Puncture

A small needle is placed in baby's lower back using sterile technique to get a very small amount of spinal fluid for special testing.

Measurements

1 milliliter (ml) = 1 cubic centimeter

(cc) = 1 gram (g)

30 g = 1 oz

15 g = 3.6 tsp = 1.2 TBSP

1 kg = 2.2 lbs

1 lb = 0.45 kg

Meconium

The first, thick black stools passed by baby; can last for several days and are thick and tar-like.

Mucus

A sticky secretion produced by membranes that line the nose, throat, and lungs.

Murmur

A "whooshing" sound of blood going through the heart and surrounding blood vessels. Detected by stethoscope, listening to the heartbeat on the chest or back. They can be a sign of a PDA or other heart problems, or they can be benign.

Nasal Cannula

A set of plastic prongs and tubing that can give extra oxygen into baby's nose.

Nasal Prongs

Small, soft plastic prongs that are placed in baby's nose to deliver oxygen or air.

Nasal Pharyngeal Tube (NPT)

A short single breathing tube that goes to the back of baby's nose and is attached to a ventilator so baby can receive positive pressure air, or puffs of air to help baby breathe.

Nasogastric Tube/Orogastric Tube (NG/NGT/OGT)

This tube is placed through the nose or mouth to the stomach and is secured with tape. It is a way to feed baby and to release built up air and gas in the stomach.

Nebulizer

A device that adds water vapor to oxygen or air so that moist air can be given to baby.

Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC)

Inflammation of the intestine leading to bacterial invasion causing cellular damage, cellular death, and necrosis (the death of most or all of the cells in an organ or tissue due to disease, injury, or failure of the blood supply) of the colon and intestine.

Neonatal

The period of time from birth to 28 days.

NICU Car Seat Test

A test used to identify infants who are at high risk for respiratory issues when in a car seat.

NPO

Nothing by mouth (not feeding).

Obstructive Apnea

A pause in breathing that occurs because baby's airway is blocked, and little air can get through. (It can happen even when baby is moving the chest to breathe.)

Oral Gastric (OG) Tube

A soft tube that goes through baby's mouth down into the stomach. (It can be used for feeding or to empty the stomach of gas.)

Oscillating Ventilator

Also called a high-frequency ventilator, it works differently than a regular ventilator. An oscillating ventilator keeps baby's lungs filled with air all the time by giving tiny amounts of air at very rapid rates.

Overbed Warmer

A large warmer that can be placed over the door of an incubator to keep baby warm during procedures.

Oximeter (Pulse OX/SAT)

A monitor that shows the amount of oxygen in the blood. The small monitor is placed around baby's foot or hand/wrist and can be easily identified by the red light. The light does not produce heat.

Oxygen

an odorless, colorless gas needed by all body cells. The air around us, 'room air'; is 21% oxygen. A baby can be given up to 100% oxygen.

Oxygen Hood (Oxyhood)

A small plastic hood placed over baby's head, giving a measured amount of oxygen and warm mist.

Oxygen Saturation (SAT)

A term that describes the amount of oxygen in the blood.

Parenteral Nutrition (PPN)

Nutrition that is given by IV, rather than through the stomach and the intestines

PDA (Patent Ductus Ateriosis)

The ductus is a blood vessel that keeps blood away from the lungs before baby is born because the lungs are filled with fluid. Usually closes shortly after birth.

Peripheral IV (PIV)

IV lines that go into "peripheral" veins. (These veins are the small blood vessels near the skin's surface, usually in baby's arms, legs or scalp.)

Periventricular Leukomalacia (PVL)

A softening of the white matter in the brain (leuko-white; malacia-softening) near the ventricles. PVL occurs because brain tissue has been injured or has died. A lack of blood flow to the brain tissue before, during, or after birth causes PVL. It is rarely possible to tell when or why this happens. PVL is sometimes linked to bleeding inside the brain (intraventricular hemorrhage)

PVL can occur in babies who are born early (preterm or premature). With PVL, the area of damaged brain tissue can affect the nerve cells that control motor movements. As the baby grows, the damaged nerve cells cause the muscles to become tight or shaky (spastic) and hard to move. Babies with PVL have a higher risk for cerebral palsy.

Petechiae

A pinpoint rash caused by tiny hemorrhages (bleeding) from the blood vessels close to the surface of the skin. (Petechiae usually mean clotting problems that result from infection or injury.)

pH

Amount of acid in the blood

Phototherapy (Bili Lights)

A special blue light used in the treatment of some types of jaundice. Eye shields are placed over baby's eyes to protect them from the light.

PICC Catheter

See central line.

Pulmonary Interstitial Emphysema (PIE)

A complication in which there are tiny tears in the air sacs or small airways of baby's lung, causing air to leak out of them.

Platelets

Parts of the blood needed for proper clotting. Also called thrombocytes.

Pneumonia

Infection in the lungs.

Pneumothorax

A collection of air in the space between the lung and the chest wall, but outside the lung.

Polycythemia

A very high number of red blood cells. (This condition causes "sluggish" circulation. In babies, it can cause breathing problems, low blood sugar and jaundice.)

Premature

A baby born before 37 weeks gestation.

Prognosis

A prediction of the course and end of a disease.

Projectile Vomiting

Extremely forceful ejection of the stomach contents.

Prostaglandins

Substances in the body that affect the blood flow to a variety of organs. (Different kinds of prostaglandins may increase or lessen the blood flow to a particular organ.)

Pseudomonas

A type of bacteria.

Pulmonary Atrisia

A congenital condition in which the pulmonary valve between the right ventricle of the heart and the pulmonary artery does not develop correctly.

Pulmonary Hypertension

An inability of the blood vessels of the lungs to relax and open up normally after birth. (Poor circulation through the lungs and poor oxygen levels in the blood result. Respiratory therapy and inhaled or IV drugs may be used to relax the lungs' tight vessels to help treat this.)

Pulmonary Insufficiency of the Premature (PIP)

A type of respiratory distress that affects the youngest premature infants (Caused as much by an immaturity of the lung tissue as by a lack of surfactant. The treatment is the same as RDS.)

Radiant Warmer

An open bed with a heat source that allows immediate access to newborn and sick preemies while maintaining a warm air temperature.

Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS)

The most common breathing problem found in preemies. Baby may be too young to develop surfactant, so the

tiny air sacs in their lungs (alveoli) do not stay open as well. Without surfactant, the air sacs collapse, and baby cannot get enough air into the lungs to breathe effectively. Surfactant therapy sends surfactant down a tube into the lungs, which helps make the lungs more flexible and eases ventilation.

Retractions

A pulling-in of the abdominal wall between, above, and/or below the ribs while breathing. This indicates breathing difficulty or distress.

Rh Factor

A type of protein that may or may not be present on a person's red blood cells.

Room Air

Refers to the concentration of oxygen in the air around us, which is 21%.

Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)

Abnormal growth of blood vessels in the eye most common in babies who were born very premature. Babies will have their eyes examined for ROP if they meet criteria, or on the advice of the medical team. Ask if baby will be getting eye exams.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

A common virus that gives most people a cold, but can be more serious, causing infections such as pneumonia or bronchiolitis.

Oxygen Saturation (SAT)

A term that describes the amount of oxygen in the blood.

Secretions

Fluids released by the body i.e., spit, mucous, sweat, urine, etc.

Seizures

Abnormal electrical activity of the brain that may be associated with involuntary muscle movements.

Sepsis

An infection in the blood. For possible infection, blood samples are drawn (culture, CBC) and antibiotics are started.

Septal Defect

A hole in the wall (septum) that divides the two upper chambers (atria) or two lower chambers (ventricles) of the heart. If a hole remains after birth, blood cannot circulate as it should, and the heart needs to work extra hard. Surgically sewing or patching can close an atrial septal defect (ASD) or a ventricular septal defect (VSD). Small holes may heal by themselves or not need repair at all.

Septic Work-Up

Includes blood drawn for CBC, and blood culture. If baby is very ill, spinal fluid or urine will be obtained and sent for culture.

Shunt

1. An artificially created passage between two areas of the body, i.e., ventriculo-peritoneal shunt for hydrocephalus. (This is a tube that drains fluid from the ventricles of the brain into the abdominal cavity.)
2. An abnormal connection between two areas of the body, such as a right-to-left or left-to-right shunt through the ductus arteriosus.

Small for Gestational Age (SGA)

When baby's length, weight or head circumference is below the 10th percentile for their gestational age.

Sleep Study

A test that measures and records various things that happen when baby sleeps i.e., eye, muscle, and limb movements, breathing, etc.

Spell

A term that describes bradycardia, apnea, or oxygen desaturation.

Steroid

A drug given to reduce inflammation, especially in the throat, trachea, and lungs.

Stridor

Harsh, high pitched sound during breathing associated with respiratory distress.

Subarachnoid Hemorrhage

Bleeding in the area around the outside of the brain (subarachnoid space).

Suction

Mechanical removal of mucus from the nose, throat, or endotracheal tube with a plastic tube.

Suprapubic Tap

A sterile specimen of urine obtained from a needle tap into the bladder.

Surfactant

A substance produced by the lungs that serves as a coating in the air sacs and keeps the tiny air sacs open between breaths. (Surfactant is often lacking in preterm babies, and this can lead to Respiratory Distress Syndrome or lung immaturity in the premature baby. Today man-made surfactants can dramatically improve respiratory status.)

Swallow Study

Video imaging of baby swallowing various consistencies of liquid with varying nipple flow rates to assess the swallow function at each stage of the swallow.

Tachycardia

A heart rate that is faster than the average range. The average range for premature babies is 120-160. A full-term baby's heart rate would be slightly lower at 90-140 beats per minute.

Tachypnea

A breathing rate that is faster than the average range. Premature babies breathe at an average rate of 40-60 breaths per minute. Full-term babies breathe at an average rate of 30-60 breaths per minute.

Term Infant

An infant born between 38 and 42 weeks of gestation.

Tetralogy of Fallout

A combination of four heart defects that keeps some blood from getting to the lungs, so that a baby has episodes of cyanosis and may grow poorly. Surgical techniques allow early repair of this complex heart defect.

Thrombocytes

See platelets.

Thrush

A fungus infection of the mouth characterized by white patches on a red inflamed surface.

Total Perinatal Nutrition (TPN)

An IV solution (often yellow) that contains nutrients to help a baby grow. TPN is used when a baby is not able or is just starting to feed.

Tracheostomy (TRACH)

A surgical opening in the trachea, below the larynx (voice box), made to allow air to enter the lungs when the throat becomes obstructed.

Transfusion

Blood or blood products given through an IV.

Transient Tachypnea of the Newborn (TTN)

An excess of lung fluid at the time of delivery, causing an elevated respiratory rate until the fluid is absorbed.

Transposition of the Great Arteries

A condition in which the positions of the two major arteries leaving the heart are reversed, so that each comes from the wrong pumping chamber. Surgery is required to correct this.

Tricuspid Atresia

A congenital condition in which the valve between the right atria and ventricle does not form.

Umbilical Artery Catheter, Umbilical Vein Catheter, Umbilical Artery Line (UAC/UVC/UAL)

A soft, clear catheter placed into one of the arteries or veins in the umbilical cord. Used to monitor BP, draw blood for testing, and give fluids. In very sick or premature babies this line is placed at birth using a sterile technique.

Ultrasound

A procedure that uses sound waves to produce a picture of baby's internal organs. (i.e., brain, heart, kidneys, liver etc.)

A series of head ultrasounds are done on babies who meet criteria, or on the advice of the medical team. Ask if baby is getting head ultrasounds.

Umbilicus

Belly button or cord. This cord has three major vessels (one vein and two arteries) and is clamped at birth. Usually, this cord dries up and falls off shortly after birth. However, with premature babies, the umbilical vessels are used to insert arterial and venous catheters.

Upper Respiratory Infections (URI)

An infection that affects any part of the respiratory tract above the larynx (voice box) i.e., a cold, sinus infection, laryngitis, etc.

UTI

Urinary tract infection; usually refers to infections of the bladder.

Veins

Vessels that carry blood from the rest of the body back to the lungs to be oxygenated.

Ventilator ('Vent')

A machine used to help baby breathe. The machine connects to the ETT or NPT.

Ventriculo-Peritoneal (VP) Shunt

A long-term treatment for hydrocephalus. (A VP shunt is a long, plastic tube that is inserted surgically.

The shunt carries excess fluid from the ventricles in the brain where it builds up, down to the abdomen, or peritoneum, where it can be absorbed by the body.)

Ventricular Septal Defect

A congenital condition in which there is a hole between the two lower chambers (ventricles) of the heart.

Vernix

The thick white creamy substance that protects baby's skin inside the womb toward the end of pregnancy. Premature babies are often born before their vernix has developed, so they do not have this protective coating.

Vital Signs

Temperature, heart and breathing rate and blood pressure that are recorded on baby's chart.

Vitamin K

Helps blood to clot normally; all babies receive one intramuscular injection at birth.

White Blood Cells (WBCs)

WBCs are the part of the body that fights against infection.

X-rays

A type of picture that shows the internal structures (bones and organs) of the body.

In the NICU, x-rays are also used to help the health care team confirm the proper location of tubes or lines the baby may need. They are also used to check on the condition of baby's heart, lungs and bowel.

Yeast (Candida Albicans, Monilia, Thrush)

A tiny fungus that can cause infection (Yeast infections are common after antibiotic therapy.)

Cardiothoracic Surgeon

Specializes in performing surgery on the heart.

Case Manager

Monitors baby's hospital stay. They work closely with doctors, nurses, social workers, other health professionals, and insurance companies.

Chaplain

Provides spiritual support to the family.

Charge Nurse

The nurse responsible for making the NICU run well, including scheduling NICU staff. The charge nurse admits your baby to and discharges your baby from the NICU.

Child Life Specialist

A trained professional who helps children and their families during challenging events. Child life specialists can help older children if they have a brother or sister in the NICU.

Clinical Nurse Specialist

An advanced practice nurse with a master's degree or higher. They provide education to staff and patients, lead research projects, and monitor policies and procedures in the NICU.

Dietician

Specializes in nutrition. This includes human milk, vitamin and min-

eral supplements, and preterm infant formulas used in the NICU. Dietitians help monitor what babies are fed, how their bodies respond to the food, and how they grow.

Housekeeper

The housekeeping staff keeps the NICU clean. They wash the floors and other surfaces, remove garbage, and refill the soap and towel dispensers. All these actions help prevent the spread of germs and infections.

Lactation Consultant

A person who is trained to help mothers with breast pumping or breastfeeding.

Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist/Perinatologist

Specializes in the care of high-risk pregnancies.

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

NNP or advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP), also called an advanced practice registered nurse, or APRN, is an RN who has completed advanced education and training in the care and treatment of new newborns and their families, often with a master's degree in nursing. The NNP is an expert in neonatal resuscitation; examines, diagnoses, and designs a care plan for your baby; and serves as an education re-

-source for all members of the NICU team. The NNP may also perform procedures such as intubation, central line placement, chest tube insertion, and lumbar puncture. In most US states, NNPs (and ARNPs or APRNs) may prescribe medications.

Neonatologist

A physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of sick newborns. Neonatologists have 3 years of specialized training, specifically to treat newborns, beyond that required for general pediatricians. The neonatologist is usually the most knowledgeable member of the team treating your newborn and directs the medical care of your baby. The lead physician in most NICUs is a neonatologist and, in the hierarchy of the medical team, is referred to as the attending physician.

Neonatal Physician Assistant

A physician assistant who completed their residency in the NICU. They are supervised by a physician in examining patients and prescribing medications.

Neonatology Fellow

A fully trained and certified pediatrician, receiving advanced training in the care of sick newborns. This doctor may direct the minute-to-minute work of the resident staff and report to the neonatologist in charge.

A neonatology fellow may rotate to other hospitals or areas every four to eight weeks.

Neurosurgeon

Specializes in surgery of the brain and nervous system.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

A health care provider who helps determine how well baby feeds and swallows, and how well baby moves arms and legs.

Otolaryngologist

Specializes in ear, nose, and throat surgery.

Patient Care Assistant

A person who helps nurses do things like change bed sheets, feed babies, and prepare bottles.

Pediatric Cardiologist

Specializes in diagnosis and treatment of heart problems (nonsurgical)

Pediatric Gastroenterologist

Specializes in treatment of stomach and intestinal problems (nonsurgical)

Pediatric Hematologist

Specializes in diagnosis and treatment of blood problems.

Pediatric Hospitalist

Provider who performs procedures and cares for baby under the neonatologist's supervision.

Pediatrician

Specializes in the care of infants and children.

Pediatric Intensivist

Specializes in the care of critically ill pediatric patients.

Pediatric Nephrologist

Specializes in diagnosis and treatment of kidney problems.

Pediatric Neurologist

Specializes in diagnosis and treatment of the nervous system.

Pediatric Pulmonologist

Specializes in diagnosis and treatment of certain lung conditions.

Pediatric Resident

A doctor receiving training in pediatrics. They generally spend three to six weeks in the NICU.

Pediatric Surgeon

Specializes in performing general surgery for newborns and children.

Pharmacist

Specializes in the preparation and use of medicines used in the NICU. Pharmacists help prepare medicines such as antibiotics, immunizations, or intravenous (IV) solutions, such as total parenteral nutrition (TPN).

Radiologist

Specializes in taking and reading x-rays and other imaging tests.

Respiratory Therapist (RT)

A health care provider who cares for babies with breathing problems.

Physical Therapist (PT)

Specializes in movement problems a baby has and how they may affect baby's sitting, rolling over, or walking. The PT helps improve baby's muscle strength and coordination.

Social Worker

A person who is trained to help families cope with their baby's NICU stay. A social worker can give families emotional support and help them get information about their baby's medical condition and NICU care. They also help families find resources and services to help them care for their baby, help families work with insurance companies, and help them plan for when their baby comes home.

Speech & Language Therapist

Trained to help people with speech and language problems. In the NICU, this therapist often helps newborns with feeding problems.

Unit Clerk/Unit Secretary

May answer the telephone when you call. Organizes paperwork and keeps track of who is coming and going on the unit.

Urologist

Specializes in surgery of the urinary tract.

LAPRC disclaimer:

These definitions are for use in the NICU and may have other meanings outside of this context. This information is not medical advice and medical decisions should not be made based on this information.

Sources:

Vocabulary

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