

# Neonatal Hospital in the Home

## Important information for families



the women's  
the royal women's hospital

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.

### Welcome to the Neonatal Hospital in the Home (NHITH) program

Neonatal Hospital in the Home (NHITH) allows eligible babies to continue hospital care at home with their parents or carers. Our neonatal nurses will make regular visits and phone calls to support you and your baby.

NHITH nurses are trained in neonatal intensive care and have lots of experience caring for sick and premature babies. They will support you and your baby as you go home and with any extra care your baby needs.

### Important reminders

- There's always support available. You can call NHITH any time of day or night.
- If you're concerned about your baby's health, call the phone numbers below.
  - During business hours, you'll talk with the NHITH nurse.
  - After hours, you'll talk to the nurse in charge.
  - If needed, they'll ask you to come to the hospital and arrange for a doctor to see your baby.
- In an emergency, call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance or go directly to the Royal Children's Hospital.

#### NHITH nurse mobile: 0418 501 253

- You can call this number any day between 8am to 4pm.
- After hours, call the nurse in charge on:
  - Team A: 03 8345 3493
  - Team B: 03 8345 3492

### If your baby is sick

Babies can get sick very quickly.

Seek urgent medical attention if your baby:

- is pale or blue, drowsy and hot
- has a temperature above 38 degrees and is less than 6 months old
- is weak and will not wake properly, or doesn't respond to normal stimulation
- has a weak, high pitched or continuous cry
- is vomiting green fluid
- is having convulsions
- is having difficulty breathing
- stops breathing for more than 15 seconds
- has a lump in the groin area (the space between their belly and thighs).

After your baby leaves the NHITH service, if your baby gets sick, contact your local doctor (GP) or take them to the Emergency Department at the Royal Children's Hospital or your nearest hospital.

### Keeping your baby warm

Once your baby leaves the hospital, check their temperature a few times a day.

In the hospital, the environment is carefully controlled and remains at a constant temperature. However, at home, the temperature can vary.

Use a thermometer that goes under their armpit, like the ones used in the hospital. A normal range for a baby's temperature is 36.5°C to 37.5°C. If your baby's temperature is higher or lower than this range, adjust their clothing or wraps as needed.

## Home visits

Your NHITH nurse will call you before each visit. They'll try to give you plenty of notice, but they can't promise exact appointment times. Other visits and travel between homes can be unpredictable. This might affect their schedule.

Make sure your phone is nearby so you can answer calls from the NHITH nurse.

Keep your home safe, tidy and smoke-free while the nurse visits.

Have a clean, flat surface for your nurse to weigh your baby and do their work.

Make sure both an adult and your baby are at the agreed address on the scheduled day.

## Some advice for home

It's common for babies who were born premature to make lots of noises in their sleep.

In the hospital, there's a lot of background noise so you may not hear the sounds they make. At home where it's quiet, especially at night, you're likely to hear lots of different sounds like grunting, stretching, straining, snuffling, sneezing and hiccups.

This is normal and doesn't mean your baby is sick, constipated or having problems doing a poo (bowel movement).

## Tips for settling a crying baby

Try these simple tips to help comfort and settle your baby:

- offer your baby a feed - you can breastfeed or give them a bottle
- offer them a dummy (if you're using them)
- gently rock or hold them in your arms
- speak softly or sing to them
- give your baby a warm bath
- make sure the lighting isn't too bright
- make sure they're not too hot or cold
- talk with other parents about things that work for them.

## For more information and support

### Victorian Maternal and Child Health Line

This service provides confidential advice on caring for your child, from birth to school age. You can call any time of day or night on 13 22 29.

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## Other Royal Women's Hospital numbers

- Newborn Intensive Care Reception: 03 8345 3400
- Breastfeeding Service: 03 8345 2400
- Consumer Liaison: 03 8345 2290

## Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

## Family Violence Support

### 1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732

[1800respect.org.au](https://1800respect.org.au)

**Disclaimer:** This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your or your baby's healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you or your baby require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.  
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