

# Transferring your baby to Wellington NICU for intensive care

Parent / Caregiver Information

Neonatal Intensive Care (NICU)

Wellington Neonatal Intensive Care Unit has its own transport team, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (weather permitting).

There are many situations which require the assistance of the Wellington Hospital NICU. The medical team in your hospital has been in consultation with our medical team here in Wellington, and it has been decided that your baby requires additional care in our unit.

We rely on Life Flight for the majority of our NICU transports and they provide us with either a fixed-wing aeroplane or a helicopter. If you are located close to Wellington (i.e. in Hutt, Kenepuru or Paraparaumu hospitals), then we will usually travel by road with your baby in an ambulance.

We will arrive at your hospital with a nurse, sometimes a member of the medical team and a large incubator which includes all of our monitoring equipment. Our team will work with the team at your hospital to help stabilise your baby before we leave for Wellington. Your baby may require a number of interventions before they are ready to fly and it could be a few hours before they are deemed stable enough for the flight.

## Can I travel with my baby?

There are a number of factors that we must consider before we can allow parents to travel with us. The most important issue is the amount of weight we can take on-board the flight. If your infant is being transferred by helicopter it is unlikely you will be able to travel with them. The transport coordinator at your DHB will endeavour to get you to Wellington on the most appropriate form of transport.

## There are some restrictions for mothers who have just delivered

If the mother has had a normal vaginal delivery with no complications, then she may fly without a midwife 24 hours after delivery. Occasionally, at the discretion of the NICU flight team she may be able to fly without a midwife 12 hours after delivery.

If the mother has had a caesarean section or a complicated delivery then the mother may fly 48 hours after delivery without a midwife.

## If you do fly with us

There are weight restrictions on the fixed-wing plane, so pack light. You will need;

- Warm clothing to wear on the flight
- Clothing for your stay in Wellington
- Toiletries
- Your own medication

In the initial stages it can be difficult for us to give you a date of discharge for your baby, so prepare as though you will be in Wellington for at least a week. Please let us know if you have a fear of flying or motion sickness.

## Where will you stay?

If your baby is transferred after normal working hours and you are not an inpatient on the maternity ward, ideally your hospital will have organised somewhere for you to stay before you leave. If they haven't, we will find you some temporary accommodation until the morning or after the weekend/public holiday. Whenever possible we use Ronald McDonald house, but as there is a high demand for that facility we may set

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up a fold out bed in one of our single rooms in the meantime.

## **What is it like in Wellington NICU?**

Wellington NICU is a 40 bed unit and we generally have six infants per room. It can be quite overwhelming when you first enter, as there is a lot of equipment and some noisy alarms. When you arrive at our unit we understand that you are likely to be under a lot of stress, but we will need you to fill in some forms for us before we can let you rest.

Please let family members and friends know we have strict visiting hours in NICU to protect our fragile infants. Parents (of the infant) may visit at any time (day or night). All other visitors are welcome between 3.30pm – 6pm daily.

If you have any further questions, the flight nurse will be able to assist you. Alternatively you can speak with a doctor or nurse once you arrive in Wellington NICU.

## **Contact us**

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### **Capital & Coast DHB**

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