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**Giving Every Baby a
Strong Start**
Neonatal Care &
Prematurity Awareness

MedNet Neonatal Care & Prematurity Awareness Newsletter

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A fragile beginning, a powerful journey

Every newborn deserves a healthy start. Yet, for many families, the journey begins sooner than expected. Premature birth – defined as birth before 37 completed weeks of gestation – affects an estimated 13.4 million newborns each year globally, making it one of the leading contributors to neonatal morbidity and mortality (WHO, 2024). Preterm birth complications are the leading cause of death among children under five years of age, contributing to approximately 36 of neonatal mortality and 18 of under – 5 deaths globally.

While a premature birth can feel overwhelming, today’s advances in neonatal care are helping more babies not only survive – but thrive.

What Is Neonatal Care?

Neonatal care refers to the medical support provided during the first 28 days of life—the most critical period for a newborn’s survival and development. It ranges from routine care for healthy babies to specialized treatment for premature or medically vulnerable newborns, often delivered in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) equipped with advanced technology and expert healthcare teams.

What to Do if Your Baby is in the NICU?

Having your baby in the NICU can feel overwhelming—but you are not alone. Here are simple steps to help you navigate this journey with confidence:

Stay Informed

- Speak with your baby’s care team regularly
- Don’t hesitate to ask questions, every update matters

Be Involved

- Spend time with your baby whenever possible
- Gentle touch, voice, and presence can support your baby’s development

Take Care of Yourself

- Rest when you can and ask for support from family and loved ones
- Your wellbeing is important for your baby’s recovery

Understand Your Coverage

- Check your maternity and newborn benefits to stay informed
- Open MyHealthPass to view your coverage and track requests

Reach Out When Needed

- If you have questions about approvals or coverage, support is always available
- Contact your customer support team for assistance

Remember

The NICU is a place of care, support, and progress – every day brings your baby one step closer to going home.

Why Awareness Matters

The first days and weeks of life are the most delicate. In fact

- The neonatal period is the most vulnerable time for a child's survival, with an average global rate of 17.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2024. Globally, an estimated 2.3 million children died in the first month of life in 2024 – approximately 6,200 neonatal deaths every day – accounting for 47 of all under – five deaths (UNICEF, 2024).
- Many of these outcomes are preventable with timely, quality care and evidence-based interventions.

Raising awareness about prematurity helps families recognize risks early, access care faster, and feel supported throughout their journey.



How Neonatal Care Makes a Difference

Modern neonatal care has transformed outcomes for premature babies. In the NICU, newborns receive evidence-based interventions including



1 Continuous monitoring of vital signs including heart rate, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate, and temperature



2 Thermoregulation management – maintaining optimal body temperature through incubators, radiant warmers, and Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)



3 Respiratory support including CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) and surfactant therapy for lung maturity



4 The “Golden Hour” protocol, applied during the first 60 minutes of life, helps reduce hypothermia and severe intraventricular hemorrhage in preterm infants.



5 Infection prevention and control including hand hygiene protocols, antibiotic stewardship, and aseptic techniques



6 Nutritional support early initiation of breast milk feeding, fortification, and parenteral nutrition when needed



7 Evidence-based developmental care, including FICare, cue-based feeding, minimal handling, and reduced noise and light.

Beyond technology, compassionate, family – centered care plays a vital role, ensuring parents are part of their baby’s healing journey.

Simple Steps That Make a Big Impact

Whether before or after birth, small actions can make a meaningful difference



During Pregnancy

- Attend regular prenatal check-ups
- Follow medical advice and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Seek care early if you notice unusual symptoms
- Antenatal corticosteroids administered to mothers at risk of preterm delivery to accelerate fetal lung maturity
- Antenatal magnesium sulfate for neuroprotection of the preterm brain
- Screening for risk factors such as preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, infections, and cervical insufficiency



After Birth

- Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) Skin-to-skin contact combined with exclusive breastfeeding. WHO recommends starting KMC immediately after birth for preterm and low-birth-weight babies, as it can reduce neonatal mortality by over 30, hypothermia by nearly 70, and severe infections by 15.
- Support and initiate breastfeeding early
- Delayed cord clamping now recommended by WHO to improve neonatal blood volume and reduce the need for transfusion
- Watch for any signs that need medical attention

These evidence-based interventions are proven to significantly improve outcomes for both mothers and newborns.

Supporting Families Beyond the Hospital

A premature birth is not just a medical event it's an emotional journey for families. Parents may face uncertainty, long hospital stays, and the stress of navigating care.

The good news: With the right support, timely medical care, and continuous follow-up, premature babies can grow stronger and lead healthy lives.

Long-Term Outcomes and the Importance of Follow-Up

Premature birth is associated not only with short-term complications but also with potential long-term effects, including neurodevelopmental delays, cognitive and behavioral challenges, sensory impairments (such as vision and hearing difficulties), and an increased risk of early onset chronic diseases.

Early intervention programs, developmental follow-up, and continuous monitoring can significantly mitigate these risks and support the child's full potential.

Our Commitment to You

At MedNet, we believe that every baby deserves the best possible start and every family deserves support, clarity, and care along the way.

Through your health coverage and digital tools like MyHealthPass, you can:

- Check your maternity and newborn benefits
- Track approvals and medical requests
- Access your healthcare network easily

Care You Feel. Integrity You Trust

A premature start does not define the journey
it's the care, support, and love that shape the
future.

Let's continue to raise awareness, support
families, and ensure every newborn gets the
strong start they deserve.

MedNet Team

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