

## **Welcome to the Women and Children's Unit**

**Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre**

# Welcome to the Women and Children's Unit

We look forward to caring for and supporting you and your baby. We are always here to answer questions and provide support.

## What to bring

### What should I bring for me?

- ☐ Nova Scotia health (MSI) card
- ☐ Any medications you are taking, in their original labelled containers. Please give these to your family newborn nurse. If the hospital pharmacy does not have one of your medications, we will give you your own.
- ☐ Social insurance number (SIN) to apply for baby's birth certificate
- ☐ Special nutrition instructions or food products
- ☐ Nursing pads (12)
- ☐ Super-absorbent pads (24) or disposable underwear (like Always Discreet® or Tena®) (at least 5 to 10 pairs)
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Facial tissues
- ☐ Comfortable, loose clothing (like lounge wear)
- ☐ Underwear (at least 5 pairs). **Do not wear thongs.** They do not promote good healing and can raise your risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs). **We have a small supply of disposable underwear available (you will get 1 pair).**
- ☐ Nursing bras or good supportive bras (like sports bras) (2)
- ☐ Nursing nightgown or comfortable pyjamas with buttons in the front (for easy access for nursing)
- ☐ Well-fitting, low-heeled slippers with a good grip
- ☐ Warm socks
- ☐ Housecoat (bathrobe)
- ☐ Nipple cream (like Lansinoh® or Medela®), if you plan to nurse your baby
- ☐ Toiletries (**unscented only – Nova Scotia Health is scent-free**)

- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Shampoo
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Lip balm
- ☐ Toothpaste
- ☐ Toothbrush
- ☐ Hairbrush or comb
- ☐ Hair elastics (if needed)

### Optional

- ☐ Nursing pillow or extra pillows
- ☐ Extra pillows for your bed
- ☐ Camera or cell phone
- ☐ Cell phone charger
- ☐ Phone numbers of people you may wish to call
- ☐ Watch or travel clock
- ☐ Non-slip, plastic bath tub pillow (for when you are in labour)
- ☐ *Breastfeeding Basics* book (if planning to nurse)
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/breastfeeding-basics](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/breastfeeding-basics)
- ☐ Loving Care books (available online)
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/parenting-supports](http://www.nshealth.ca/parenting-supports)
- ☐ 2 pens and paper for filling out forms about the baby (like applying for baby's birth certificate, Nova Scotia health card, and social insurance number), and for writing down any questions or other information
- ☐ Other reading material (books, magazines)
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Small amount of change (for snacks and other items)
- ☐ Credit card for in-room phone hookup, if needed (if you do not have a cell phone)

**Please leave valuables and extra money at home.  
The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any item.**

## What should I bring for the baby?

- ☐ Diapers (newborn size) (24 to 36, or 2 to 3 packages of 12 diapers) (newborns use about 12 to 14 diapers a day)
- ☐ Nursing substitutes (formula) (**if you do not plan to nurse or pump to bottle feed your baby**). You can buy single-serving bottles at most grocery stores and drugstores. **Powdered formula is not recommended for newborns because it is not considered sterile (clean) and may have bacteria (germs) that can harm your baby.**
- ☐ Diaper cream (like Penaten®, Sudocrem®, Vaseline®, Zincofax®). **Baby powder is not safe because it can cause breathing trouble and serious lung damage if your baby breathes it in.**
- ☐ Baby soap, baby shampoo (tearless), and baby lotion
- ☐ Newborn emery board/nail file
- ☐ Soothers (optional) which have been sterilized (put in boiling water for at least 5 minutes) at home. **Soothers are not recommended until nursing is well established (nursing is comfortable for you, your baby has a good latch, and they weigh more than their birth weight).**
- ☐ Receiving blankets (at least 2)
- ☐ Heavier blanket
- ☐ Undershirts and sleepers (at least 2)
- ☐ Outfits to wear home (2)
- ☐ Outfit for pictures (optional)
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ CMVSS (Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards) infant car seat **removed from the box and put together before the birth of your baby.**
- ☐ Car seat manual, in case you need it. Please note that staff cannot go to your car with you, so you should try putting the car seat in your car before the birth of your baby. Nova Scotia Health does not rent or loan car seats. We recommend that you have a car seat technician check if your car seat is a fit for your car.



**Do not use a snowsuit or a bunting bag while your baby is in their car seat. Snowsuits and bunting bags do not let the car seat straps get snug enough. They are not safe.** For more information about infant car seats, visit:

› <http://childsafetylink.ca/car-seat-safety/>

## **What should my support person bring?**

- ☐ Change of clothing
- ☐ Pyjamas (if staying overnight)
- ☐ Unscented toiletries
- ☐ A cooler with snacks and drinks
- ☐ Camera or cell phone and charger (if you would like them to take pictures)

## **About the unit**

- Each room has its own bathroom with a tub and shower.
- A reclining chair is available for your support person.
- We have a Nourishment Room with some drinks and snacks. Please bring drinks and snacks with you as well.
- We have 3 postpartum rooms (room you will be taken to after you deliver your baby). Each has a mini fridge and a TV.
- There is a phone at each bedside. You must pay if you want to have it connected. Instructions are on the phone.
- There is a gift shop on the main floor.
  - › Hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (subject to change).
- There is a café (cash and debit) and a cafeteria (credit and debit) on the main floor.
  - › Café hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
  - › Cafeteria hours: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Monday to Friday)
- Dial to Dine is available for inpatients only. Choose from the Dial to Dine menu, dial 888 from your in-room phone, or 1-833-899-0041 from any phone. Your support person can also order, but they must pay for their meal (meals are \$10, cash only).
  - › Kitchen hours: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., daily

## Can I have visitors?

- We support family-centered care at all times. Please ask your nurse for the most current guidelines around bringing a support person. **To respect the privacy of others, we ask that your support person stay in your room with you.**
- There are no regular visiting hours. Visitor guidelines change often because of Public Health regulations. Please ask staff for the most current guidelines. The first few days with your baby are important for bonding and establishing feeding. Feel free to wait until you and your baby, and your partner are ready for visitors.
- **To protect your baby, always wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before holding your baby. All visitors must do the same.**

## Smoking

- **Nova Scotia Health is smoke-free.** Smoking and vaping are not allowed anywhere in the hospital or on the hospital grounds.

## What can I expect after my baby is born?

- After delivery, your baby will stay with you. If they need extra care, they will stay in a special nursery.
- About 2 hours after delivery, you and your baby will be taken from the delivery room to your room on the unit. A nurse will be assigned to care for both of you. They will be available to answer any questions you may have, and to support you in caring for your baby.
- We encourage you to have a support person stay with you after delivery. This is a good time for them to get to know the baby. We will provide a sleeping space (reclining chair) for your support person if they want to stay with you.

- **Spend as much time as possible holding your baby skin-to-skin (against your chest, wearing only a diaper) right after they are born.** In this position:
  - › Your baby can hear the familiar, comforting sound of your heartbeat.
  - › Oxytocin (a bonding hormone) is released. This helps you form a close relationship with your baby.
  - › Your support person can also hold your baby skin-to-skin. Through a lot of skin-to-skin contact, you will get to know your baby's sleeping and feeding patterns.
- Spending as much time as possible holding your baby skin-to-skin, when you are awake, helps them:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Settle</li> <li>› Sleep</li> <li>› Feed better</li> <li>› Adjust to life in the outside world</li> <li>› Lower pain</li> <li>› Feel safe and warm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Calm down when fussy</li> <li>› Cry less</li> <li>› Get nursing off to a good start</li> <li>› Regulate their heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar, breathing, and body temperature</li> </ul>
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- Holding your baby skin-to-skin as much as you can will also help with your milk supply if you are nursing.
- Babies are given vitamin K after birth. They need it for their blood to clot properly. Vitamin K is given by an injection using a needle in your baby's thigh. **To distract or soothe your baby while the injection is being given, your nurse may suggest you hold your baby skin-to-skin.**
- You will bathe and feed your baby with help from your nurse.
- You will be given a paper to keep track of your baby's feedings and diaper changes.
- Right after delivery, the nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, vaginal bleeding, abdomen (stomach area), and stitches (if any) often. These checks are done every 15 minutes in the first hour, once every hour in the first 4 hours, then once every 4 hours in the first 24 hours (1 day) to make sure you are recovering well and not having any complications. Checks will be done less often during the rest of your hospital stay. **If you feel that something is not right, ask your nurse for help.**

## Taking care of yourself

- **Be sure a nurse is with you when you get up for the first time to go to the bathroom.** You may feel weak or unsteady. This is normal.
- Whenever you change your pad, pee, or have a bowel movement (poop), it is important to rinse yourself well with a squirt bottle (also called a peri bottle).
- You can also use your peri bottle while peeing to help water down your urine (pee). This will make it sting less. Gently pat the area dry with toilet paper. **Do not wipe.** This irritates the skin.
- For pain relief after giving birth, use your sitz bath 2 to 3 times a day, especially if you have stitches. Your nurse will show you how to do this the first time you pee.
- If you have had a vaginal delivery, you can shower as soon as you feel comfortable.
- If you have had a cesarean section (C-section), you will usually be able to shower on the second day.

## Taking care of your baby

- Your baby will have a bassinet at your bedside. Be sure to talk with your nurse about your baby's care. Your nurse will teach you how to bathe your baby.
- For the first 24 hours, we will check your baby often. After that, if all is well, they will be checked 2 times a day and weighed every day.
- On the second day, your baby will have routine blood tests before being discharged. These tests are done on all babies born in Nova Scotia. **Please hold your baby skin-to-skin for these blood tests.** We will also give your baby a few drops of sugar water, which is proven to help with newborn pain. Routine blood tests include:
  - › Newborn screening (checks for metabolic, blood, endocrine, and immune disorders)
  - › Bilirubin (checks your baby's jaundice levels). Jaundice happens when bilirubin (made by the normal breakdown of red blood cells) builds up faster than a newborn's liver can break it down and pass it from their body. All newborns will have some jaundice, but there is a safe level of jaundice which depends on the baby's age.



- Some babies may need light therapy (called **phototherapy**) or need to stay in the hospital longer for monitoring.
- All babies in Nova Scotia will have a hearing test done shortly after birth. The hospital will fax a referral to the hearing and speech center, and they will contact you in about 1 week to book a test. If you do not hear from them, please call:
  - › Phone: 902-667-1141

## Keeping your baby safe

- **The safety of your baby is very important while you are on the unit.** Shortly after delivery, you and your baby will be identified with matching armbands. During your hospital stay, the armbands will make sure we can correctly identify your baby. **Do not remove the armbands until you have left the hospital. This is the only way to identify the parent and baby pair.**
- All hospital staff must wear a photo ID. **Do not give your baby to anyone who is not wearing a hospital ID badge.**
- **Do not leave your baby alone in your room.** If you are leaving your room and do not want to take your baby with you, ask a family member, support person, or a nurse to stay with your baby.
- To prevent a fall while walking, please put your baby in their hospital bassinet. **Do not** carry them. The bassinet has wheels.
- If you are **alone** and getting into the tub or shower, please wheel the baby's bassinet in with you so you can see and hear them. **If you had a C-section, ask your nurse or support person to wheel the bassinet into the bathroom for you.**

## Discharge

- As your discharge day gets closer, your nurses will talk with you about how to get ready to go home with your baby. They will talk about your baby's feeding plan, follow-up care for you and your baby, your birth control plans, and car seat safety. Your nurse will teach you about car seat safety.
- Your nurses may give you a follow-up appointment to return to the unit to check your baby's weight, give you feeding support, and answer questions you may have.
- Infant feeding clinic: This clinic is run by a lactation consultant. To book an appointment:
  - › Phone: 902-667-5400, extension 6144

## Paperwork

- Before your baby is born, you will get a booklet called *Register your baby*. This booklet explains how to register your baby's birth (apply for their birth certificate) at the registration kiosk. **You or your support person must do this before you go home.**
  - › <https://beta.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/1-4035/register-your-baby-en.pdf>
- You will need your Nova Scotia health card, your SIN, your baby's health card number, and a method of payment (Visa®, MasterCard®, American Express®, or Interac® Online). Nursing staff will give you your baby's health card number.

## Resources

- The Read to Me program gives a free bag of books and literacy resources to every baby born in Nova Scotia. If you did not get the books while you were in the hospital, visit:
  - › [www.readtome.ca/how-do-i-get-the-bag](http://www.readtome.ca/how-do-i-get-the-bag)
- Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting is a public health program available to all parents in Nova Scotia. It supports families by offering home visits and suggesting community programs and services that may be helpful. With your consent, a nurse will ask you a few questions while you are in the hospital. Your public health nurse will use this information to help you find supports you may be interested in.
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/Healthy-Beginnings](http://www.nshealth.ca/Healthy-Beginnings)
- Maggie's Place: Offers prenatal and postpartum resources. They also give information about child safety seats, and can help you have your car seat professionally installed by a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST). For more information:
  - › Visit: [www.maggiesplace.ca](http://www.maggiesplace.ca)
  - › Email: [Cumberland@maggiesplace.ca](mailto:Cumberland@maggiesplace.ca)
  - › Phone: 902-667-7250

## Feedback

We value your feedback. You can contact Patient Relations at:

- › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177
- › Email: [NZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca](mailto:NZpatientrelations@nshealth.ca)

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