

Families appreciate those who simply listen. Be aware of the many feelings that may be expressed, including anger, grief, joy, and hope.

Suggest one person to be the designated caller who can relay information about the baby's condition so that the parents aren't burdened with phone calls. The designated caller is:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

The family has a CaringBridge® Web site. Ask them whom you can share that with. The CaringBridge® Web site is:

Offer to do something specific that you can enjoy doing for the family, rather than saying, "Call if you need anything." While families appreciate all offers, it still can be difficult to identify what is needed and to ask for it.

Organize a fundraiser.

Provide freezer storage, to help store breast milk.

Other: _____

What everyone can do

- Respect the doctor's diagnosis and plan of care; it has already been difficult for the family to accept. Also, respect the fact that decisions about a child's care are the parents' responsibility.
- Avoid telling comparison stories about other premature or seriously ill children.
- Resist smothering the baby or siblings with gifts.
- Avoid telling the family about the many Web sites you have found. They have probably already seen them. The Family Resource Center can help families search the Web to find information related to their situation.
- Stay in touch. Don't treat the family or baby differently or avoid them because you don't know what to say. Just the fact that you care enough to stay in touch means a lot.
- Notes, cards, and e-mail messages are a good way to show support; parents can read them when it's convenient. Please don't expect immediate responses.

How can I help? For families and friends

4-08/5227
C31570

Announcing the birth of

Date _____

Weight _____

Length _____

Currently in the hospital at Children's
Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota.

Baby's photo

We want you to know that our baby has arrived and is in a neonatal unit at Children's of Minnesota.

The neonatal units include the neonatal intensive care units (NICU) on the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses, and the infant care center (ICC) and special care nursery (SCN) on the Minneapolis campus. In these units, doctors and nurses give around-the-clock care to premature newborns and babies who are sick. The neonatal staff members have special training in the field of neonatology.

The birth of a premature baby or an ill infant is a unique experience, different from a typical labor and delivery. The staff in the neonatal unit has developed a list of ways that you can support our family while our baby is in the neonatal unit. Below, we have checked those that are most helpful to us right now.

Thank you for your love and support.

What you can do to be helpful

- Spend time with the other children in the family. They appreciate your love and attention. Offer them rides, overnights, or time with your family at a movie, playground, or special event while the parents visit the baby.
- Offer to clean the house or pay for a housekeeper, do laundry, cut the grass, shovel snow, check on pets, or check the mail.
- Buy groceries, or bring meals and healthy snacks to the home or the hospital. Ask one person to coordinate this. The food coordinator is:
Name: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____
- Bring items for the parents, such as clean clothes, toilet articles, spare change for vending machines, gift cards to local restaurants, gas cards, vouchers for parking or the hospital cafeteria. Parking vouchers can be purchased from the cashier; call (612) 813-6235 or (651) 220-6199.
- Respect the family's privacy. Call before you visit and make visits short. Do not visit if you have any signs of illness, such as cough, runny nose, fever, or nausea.
- Encourage parents to be mindful of their own needs for sleep, food, exercise, and breaks away from the bedside or hospital.
- Offer transportation.