

## Infant Sign out of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

<b>Category</b>	NICU
<b>Sub-Category</b>	Policies and Guidelines Folder
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### POLICY STATEMENT

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre (Sunnybrook) supports the practice of issuing **Off Unit Time** to parents/guardians who wish to take their stable or palliative infants who are greater than 35 weeks corrected age off the unit or outdoors for a period of time. Encouraging parental/guardian involvement in this manner, builds capacity and facilitates bonding between parents/guardians and their infant(s). It is therefore essential that parents /guardians have an opportunity to leave the unit with their infant(s) unescorted once it has been determined appropriate by the NICU team.

### DEFINITIONS

**Substitute Decision Maker (SDM):** individual or individuals who have legal custody of infant and who are responsible for making personal and health decisions on infant's behalf. For the purpose of this document the SDM is referring to the parent(s) and guardian(s).

**Most Responsible Prescriber (MRP):** The doctor, nurse practitioner, fellow or resident, or other health care provider who is responsible for the infant.

**Off Unit Time:** Authorized time out of the NICU on the written order of the MRP who has determined that infant is medically stable and appropriate/safe for time out of the NICU with parent/guardian.

**Stable Infants:**

- no evidence of significant apnea/bradycardia requiring intensive care intervention (such as initiation of oxygen, suctioning) documented for at least seven days,
- Baby's ability to maintain their body temperature when the infant is nursed in an open cot
- approved as stable by their MRP

**Palliative Infants:**

- Infant is receiving end of life care with an established DNR order.

**POLICY**

Substitute Decision Makers (SDMs) of stable or palliative Infants will be supported to leave the NICU to either go outside or remain in hospital with their infant for a period of Off Unit Time that has been determined collaboratively by the SDM(s) and the Most Responsible Prescriber.

**Stable Infant escorted by parents/guardians:**

- Unit staff will accompany SDM(s) off of the unit to a previously agreed upon designated exit to avoid unnecessary exposure
- SDM(s) are encouraged to avoid crowded areas of the hospital that may compromise the infant's health (e.g. cafeterias)
- Length of time off unit as per discussion with NICU medical team
- May leave the hospital building but must stay on hospital grounds within the indicated area (boundaries that have been previously established by NICU medical team SDM(s), see [Appendix 2](#))
- If SDM(s) are to go outside, they are to use the Main Ground exit and follow hospital infection prevention and control guidelines when exiting hospital. This will be reviewed with SDM(s) by the nurse.
- SDM(s) to have their own working cell phone on their person with the phone ringer on and charged with sufficient battery power. NICU (416-480-6055) and hospital emergency phone (416-480-5555), numbers must be available to them.
- Nurse to ensure that SDM(s) updated cell phone number is written on the white board in the infant's room

- Infant is required to remain in the stroller and with monitoring device on while in transit
- Infant can be taken out of the stroller once destination is reached but the monitoring device is to remain on
- Prior to re-entering hospital, SDM(s) are to call NICU at 416-480-6055 to coordinate meeting at previously agreed upon designated pick up spot in order to be escorted back to the unit. SDM(s) are to follow hospital infection prevention and control guidelines when re-entering hospital.

### **Palliative Infant escorted by SDM(s)**

Subject to the same conditions as stable infants, except that:

- No monitoring device is required
- SDM(s) may walk with infant in hand –no stroller required. May be carried while in transit and at destination

### **PROCEDURE**

Essential Elements		Rationale
1.	An updated order to be written as required by the MRP in the chart once infant deemed safe for Off Unit Time and risk/benefit discussed with SDM(s)	Provides permission for infant to leave the unit with SDM(s)
2.	Verbal agreement between SDM(s) and nurse to leave the NICU, specifying timing of outing and confirming agreement with the policy requirements	Allows for open communication between team and SDM(s) confirming the exact timing that infant will be off unit and that they understand and agree to the requirements of this policy
3.	SDM(s) to sign “Out” of and “In” to the NICU using Individualized Off Unit Time sign out sheet ( <a href="#">Appendix 1</a> ).	Records Off Unit Time and confirms verbal agreement and that SDM(s) acknowledge and agree to accept responsibility for their infant and risks related to Off Unit Time
4.	SDM(s) must advise nurse of destination location and estimated time of return	Provides information on location of infants and ensures that nurse can locate SDM(s) in case of emergency
5.	Safety checks completed by bedside nurse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor working with alarm limits set</li> <li>● Portable Oxygen tank full</li> <li>● SDM(s) demonstrates comfort with being alone with infant, providing stimulation should they appreciate an event on the monitor</li> <li>● Identification on infant</li> <li>● Adequately charged working cell phone on SDM(s) parents/guardians person</li> </ul>	Ensures safety of infant following NICU safety check guidelines.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SDM(s) to save unit and emergency numbers in cell phone</li> </ul>	
6.	Off Unit Time sign out sheet to be kept with the infant's chart	Ensures accurate record keeping of events

**Emergency Procedure while off the unit.**

**1. Within the hospital:**

SDM to call the NICU at 416-480-5555 and report location to emergency line so that nurse and resuscitation team can respond and escort infant back to unit.

**2. Outside the hospital:**

SDM to call 911 and then contact the NICU 416-480-6055. NICU to respond as per organizational code pink policy, or as indicated based on the clinical situation.

**RELATED SUNNYBROOK POLICIES**

[Code Pink/ Emergent Intervention Required- Neonatal](#) (CODE-0004)

[Leave of Absence \(Pass\) for Acute Care Patients and Residents in Long Term Care](#) (PC-0027)

## APPENDICES AND REFERENCES

### Appendix 1: Off-unit Sign out Sheet

#### Off-unit Sign out Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Date	Time Out	TL Notified	Parent / Guardian Signature	Safety Check	Time In	Parent / Guardian Signature	TL Notified
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.								
14.								
15.								

#### Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

By signing this form, I/we, the parent(s)/guardian(s), acknowledge and agree:

- That our nurse has explained, and I/we understand, the Off Unit Policy with respect to:
  1. what to do in case of emergency
  2. guidelines for transporting baby around hospital and hospital grounds
- to accept full responsibility for my/our infant(s), including the risks to my/our infant(s) should an emergency or medical event occur, when leaving the NICU for off unit time
- to return with my/our infant(s) to the NICU within 60 minutes of leaving the unit
- that I/we will remain within the boundaries of the hospital and hospital grounds as explained to me/us by our nurse
- that I/we have or will have completed the necessary safety checks with our nurse prior to leaving the unit

## Appendix 2: Outdoor Sunnybrook Site Boundaries

