



What happens if my baby is born too soon, too small, too sick or needs surgery?

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You have been given this information leaflet because you have booked to have your baby at a maternity unit within the West Midlands Neonatal Operational Delivery Network (WMNODN). The hospitals in WMNODN work together to make sure families receive the care they need, as close as possible to home.

This leaflet gives information about what will happen if your baby is born too soon, too small, too sick or needs surgery. The specialist care babies need after birth is called Neonatal Care and is provided by specially trained nurses and doctors within a Neonatal Unit. About 1 in every 9 babies born will need neonatal care and the units within the West Midlands all work together to provide different levels of care. Neonatal Intensive Care is a highly specialised service and is limited to a few specialist centres in which babies are transferred between hospitals to meet their needs.

Neonatal care is highly specialised and not all Neonatal units have the facilities and staff to provide the full range of care for the smallest and sickest babies. If your baby needs neonatal care after delivery, they will be transferred to the appropriate neonatal unit depending on their needs. **This means that if your baby requires neonatal care you will NOT have a choice where this care is provided.**

“When might I or my baby be transferred to another hospital?”

If your midwife or obstetrician is concerned that your baby will need neonatal care it may be recommended that you are transferred to a hospital that has the necessary facilities for your baby **before you give birth**. This is because studies in England have shown that very premature babies do better if they are born in a hospital with neonatal intensive care units on site. However if transfer is not possible, all hospitals are able to provide the immediate care your baby needs whilst arrangements are made to transfer your baby to the nearest appropriate neonatal unit. A team of specially trained staff will safely make this transfer between hospitals.

If your hospital has a neonatal intensive care unit and your baby needs specialised care that is not so intensive your baby may need to be transferred to another unit within the network that is able to provide such care. This may need to happen in order to keep spaces in the intensive care unit for a baby that requires this level of care.

Your baby will be transferred to another neonatal unit within the West Midlands as long as there is a cot available. Very occasionally, your baby may need to be transferred to a hospital outside of this region.

Every day, the nurses and doctors will review and plan your baby’s care. As soon as your baby is well enough to no longer need specialist facilities, your baby will be transferred to a neonatal unit as close to home as possible, which specialises in preparing you and your baby for discharge.





“What are the different types of Neonatal Unit?”

Special Care Units (SCU):

Provide care for babies who need continuous monitoring of their breathing or heart rate, additional oxygen, tube feeding, treatment for jaundice or infection and convalescence from other care.

Local Neonatal Units (LNU):

LNUs are for babies needing short-term intensive care with breathing difficulties and babies requiring intravenous feeding if they are too ill or too small to feed by mouth.

Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU):

Provide the highest level of care to the smallest and sickest babies. For example babies that need breathing support from a ventilator for more than 48 hours or are born before 27 weeks of pregnancy.

Transfers for Surgical Care:

Babies needing surgery or with a heart problem will be cared for on a neonatal unit to begin with but then transferred to Birmingham Children’s Hospital or Alder Hey in Liverpool. Some babies will return to a neonatal unit before they are discharged home.

Stand Alone Midwifery Led Units (MLU):

MLUs are managed and staffed by midwives. They offer care to women with a straightforward pregnancy that are low risk of developing any complications. If your baby requires specialist care after birth they will be transferred to a neonatal unit.



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NICU's	LNU's	SCU's
Birmingham Women's Hospital	Walsall Manor Hospital	George Eliot Hospital
Coventry Hospital	Worcester Hospital	Hereford County Hospital
Royal Stoke Hospital	The Princess Royal Hospital (Telford)	Warwick Hospital
Birmingham Heartlands Hospital	Birmingham City Hospital	Birmingham Good Hope Hospital
Royal Wolverhampton Hospital	Russells Hall Hospital	

