



Coming to GOSH soon after birth: information for families

This information sheet has been written to explain about coming to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) soon after your baby's birth and what support you can expect when you stay here. Whether the transfer was planned or not, you are bound to feel overwhelmed by all that you are feeling. We hope that this information sheet gives you some useful tips and suggestions.

Some mums have to stay in their local hospital for a day or two so that they can recover from the birth while their baby is staying at GOSH. We will explain to you exactly what has happened since your baby was transferred to us, and keep you updated over the telephone. If you want us to repeat anything, please ask us. It is important that you understand your baby's condition.

You are encouraged to visit your baby as often as you can. We have adult-sized wheelchairs if you are unable to walk to the ward. However, you will need to be officially discharged from the hospital where you gave birth before you can stay overnight at GOSH. You will probably feel uncomfortable for a while afterwards so we advise that someone stays with you, both while you are visiting and when you are staying with us.

Staying at GOSH

If your baby is in intensive care, accommodation is available for two of you. This can be a short walk away or within the hospital building. If your baby has been transferred to another one of our wards, we can offer accommodation to only one of you. We can also give you details of hotels in the local area.

Registering your baby's birth

You will have to register your baby's birth within 42 days (6 weeks). You do not need to take your baby to the registry office to do this. It is advisable to book an appointment – you can do this online in most cases.

- If your baby was born **within London Borough of Camden**, you should register the birth at Camden Register Office (see map on next page). This is a short taxi ride from the hospital.
- If your baby was born **outside of London Borough of Camden**, you can still register the birth at Camden Register Office. They will contact your local register office who will send the certificate in the post.

Who should register the birth?

- If the baby's mother and father were married at the time of the birth, either parent can register the birth and both names will be included on the birth certificate. If they were not married, the mother must register the birth but the father can attend to sign the register.
- If the baby's mother was married or in a civil partnership with their same sex

partner at the time of the baby's conception, and if the baby was conceived through artificial insemination, then either partner can come to register the birth.

If one parent cannot attend the registry office but are eligible to be on the birth certificate (as outlined above), that parent will need to complete the statutory declaration form. This must be attested by a legal professional (for instance, a solicitor or magistrate). The Pals Office can help you to find a local solicitor or magistrate if needed.

Where there is a parental responsibility agreement in force or either parent has an appropriate Court Order, this can be presented when registering.

Where is Camden Register Office?

It is in the Crowndale Centre, 220 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BD. This is a short taxi ride from GOSH.



What information will be required?

You will need the birth notification letter from the hospital or your baby's red book AND photographic identification (such as passport or driving licence) for each parent of the child that will be recorded on the birth certificate.

The registrar will ask you to confirm:

- The baby's date and place of birth (plus time if you had twins or more)
- The full name (and any previous) names, date and place of birth and occupation of both parents

Once your baby has been registered, you will get one copy of the short birth certificate form free of charge. You will probably want to buy at least one copy of the full birth certificate, as this will be needed in the future for various reasons, such as opening bank accounts or applying for a passport.

Breastfeeding

We encourage all our new mums to try to breastfeed. Do ask the nursing staff on the ward what help is available and for a copy of our booklet *Expressing and breastfeeding at GOSH* for more information and tips.

Visits from a midwife after delivery

You can receive your postnatal care from the community midwives from University College London Hospital (UCLH) while you are an inpatient at GOSH. We have a drop in postnatal midwife clinic at GOSH on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons between 2.30pm and 4pm. Your nurse can give you more information and clinic locations. You do not need an appointment but please bring your maternity book and/or any notes that you have been given by the hospital where you were delivered.

If you need to speak to a midwife or need stitches removed outside of these clinic times, please call

the UCLH Community Midwives office number on 020 3447 9567 or email

mycommunitymidwife@uclh.nhs.uk

You will be able to see the midwife on your own, and, during your first visit, they will see how you are doing and plan your following visits to the clinic. If you and your baby leave GOSH before your next visit to the clinic, please tell the midwives via the contact details above so that they can ask your local midwife to visit you at home.

In an emergency

At the first postnatal clinic appointment, all new mothers will be advised of the signs and symptoms of potentially life-threatening conditions. If any of these signs and symptoms occur, please contact the community midwives at UCLH or a member of staff immediately.

Signs and symptoms	Potential condition
Sudden and profuse blood loss or persistent increased blood loss	Postpartum haemorrhage
Fever, shivering, abdominal pain and/or offensive vaginal discharge	Infection or sepsis
Headaches and visual disturbances and/or nausea and vomiting within 72 hours of birth	Pre-eclampsia or eclampsia
Pain, redness or swelling in one calf and/or shortness of breath and/or chest pain	Thromboembolism (blood clot)

In an emergency, call 020 3447 6145 for 24 hour midwifery advice.

Local family doctor (GP) surgery

Alternatively, you can arrange to see the local GP at the Holborn Medical Centre on Lambs Conduit Street. You will need to register in person as a 'temporary resident' and the Medical Centre staff will call you back. If you have any questions, please call the Holborn Medical Centre on 020 3077 0044.

Screening tests for your baby

Newborn babies are offered screening tests in their first six to eight weeks, although the timing may be different when a baby is ill or in intensive or high dependency care.

Newborn physical examination

A thorough physical examination is carried out on all newborn babies, to identify any problems early so treatment can be started as soon as possible. This is normally carried out within 72 hours of birth, but will not be done until your baby is well enough. You will be offered a further examination when your baby is six to eight weeks of age, as some conditions can become apparent later.

Newborn blood spot test

The newborn blood spot test involves taking a small sample of your baby's blood to screen it for nine rare but serious health conditions.

The blood spot sample is usually taken when a baby is five days old. However, the timing is different when a baby is ill or in intensive or high dependency care. If your baby is born before 32 weeks' gestation another sample should be taken when your baby is 28 days old.

Newborn hearing screening test

The newborn hearing screening test is done soon after your baby is born. If you gave birth in hospital, you may already have been offered the test before you and your baby were discharged.

At GOSH we do not routinely offer newborn hearing screening so this will need to be done by your health visitor, local audiology department or family doctor (GP) after discharge.

Retinopathy of Prematurity

Babies born at less than 32 weeks of gestation or weighing less than 1501g at birth will be screened for retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). ROP affects the light receiving cells at the back of the eye and is thought to be caused by disorganised growth of retinal blood vessels, which can result in scarring and retinal detachment. The date the first screening is due varies depending on how prematurely your baby was born but is usually around four to five weeks of age and continues until your baby is near their original due date. Ask your medical team about when screening is due for your baby.

Jaundice

Jaundice is the medical word used to describe a yellowing of the skin and white parts of the eyes (sclera). Neonatal jaundice is a very common condition – around 60 per cent of babies born at term and 80 per cent of babies born early (prematurely) develop neonatal jaundice. In the majority of cases, jaundice is harmless and fades without treatment. A small number of babies can develop more significant jaundice that requires treatment. Treatment is needed because extremely high levels of jaundice can damage the brain and cause hearing problems. However, this is a very rare complication that is not expected with current treatments. All babies admitted to GOSH less than seven days old and or are visibly jaundiced will have their jaundice level measured.

Further information about all of these issues is available on the GOSH website and from the

medical and nursing teams caring for you and your baby.

Getting to know your baby

Your baby will still need you while they are in hospital and we want to help you look after your baby as much as you can. Your baby may be sedated, but they can still hear and recognise familiar voices and sounds. We encourage you to read or talk to your baby and be as involved in their daily cares as you feel happy.

Keeping in touch

Your family and friends are bound to want to know how you and your baby are doing but it can seem overwhelming to have to tell the same thing to lots of people over and over again. Some of our parents have found that nominating one person to pass on information helps, as they only have to call that one person.

If you do want to have a chat, you can use your mobile phone in designated safe areas.

Quiet time on NICU

Every day between 2pm and 4pm, we have 'quiet time' on NICU when only parents are allowed to visit. This gives the babies time to rest.

Time out

While we want you to be as involved in looking after your baby as you feel able, we want you to have some time out too. Please do not feel you have to spend every minute with your baby. It is important that you have some time out too. It can help to have a gentle walk outside daily.

Keeping your strength up

We know that you might not feel like eating much, but you need to keep yourself well. Please make sure you eat regularly. Remember that most wards have a kitchen so you can make yourself tea and coffee. There are places in the hospital to eat, such as the Lagoon restaurant and coffee

shop. If you feel up to going out to eat, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (Pals) Office can give you some suggestions.

Finally

If you think things are getting too much, there are people throughout the hospital who are there to listen and help, like your ward nurses, the social workers, family liaison nurses, chaplains and Pals. We are all here to help.

You can also contact the Bliss Buddy Scheme – this is a one-to-one service for families of babies who have been, or are in, neonatal care. Parents

who may need a bit of extra support are matched with other parents who have previously been through the experience of having a baby in special care. Call the Bliss Helpline on 0500 618 140 or email hello@bliss.org.uk. An advisor will take some details and match you up with a Buddy within a few days.

If you have any questions about the midwifery services provided to mothers at GOSH, please visit the Family Accommodation Office in the main reception area. You can also call them on 020 7813 8151 or 020 7829 8877.