Early discharge from the Neonatal Unit

Information for patients
Neonatology
What is early discharge home from the Neonatal Unit?

Early discharge home allows your baby to be discharged at an earlier date and allows them to continue their progress at home.

Your baby will be able to develop their feeding skills at home with the help of a nasogastric tube.

Early discharge is supported by the neonatal multi disciplinary team who will work with you before and after discharge.

What are the benefits of the early discharge home?

The benefits of early discharge home are that you are likely to take your baby home from hospital earlier and shorten the time spent apart for you and your baby.

Will my baby be able to be discharged home early from the Neonatal Unit?

When your baby is transferred to Special Care, the Co-ordinator will meet with you and talk about all aspects of early discharge home. Since you need to be supported at home by the Jessop Neonatal Family Care Team, early discharge is only available for families who live in Sheffield.

Early discharge home may be possible if your baby:

- Weighs more than 1,500g and is growing and gaining weight well
- Is maintaining their own temperature in an open cot
- Is around 34 weeks corrected
- Is taking some feeds by breast or bottle
- Doesn't need their heart rate monitoring

Your baby will be assessed by a Senior Nurse and Doctor for all of the above.
What do I need to know before I take my baby home?

You will need to be able to feed your baby safely using a nasogastric tube. The multi disciplinary team will ensure you receive all the help and support you need to do this. You will have been involved in your baby's feeding from the beginning and will have become experienced in nasogastric tube feeding. You will be given all the training and information that you will need.

Tube feeding at home can increase the day to day demands on you and your family. It is important that you think about family and friends who may be able to support you once you get home. It is also important to remember that when you first go home, your baby would usually still be in hospital.

Preparing for early discharge home involves:

- Practical skills training sessions with the Special Care Baby Unit Co-ordinator
- Infant life support training
- Being provided with information about nasogastric tube feeding at home
- Planning the extra support you might need from family and friends

What support is available when I take my baby home?

You will be supported by a member of the Neonatal Family Care Team. The team is made up of specialist community neonatal nurses who will visit you and your baby in your home.

The Family Care Team work from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

A 24 hour phone service will also be available and you can ring the Neonatal Unit for advice and support.