

Your baby's care

**Measuring standards and
improving neonatal care**





Your baby's care

" We believe that it is vital for parents and clinical staff to work together to improve babies' care, including through the measures within the National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP).

Working as a team, we are committed to improving care for babies who need specialist treatment and to helping parents feel empowered to take an active role in the care of their baby.

We encourage all staff to use this data and join us on the journey to spread innovation and involvement to improve babies' care. "

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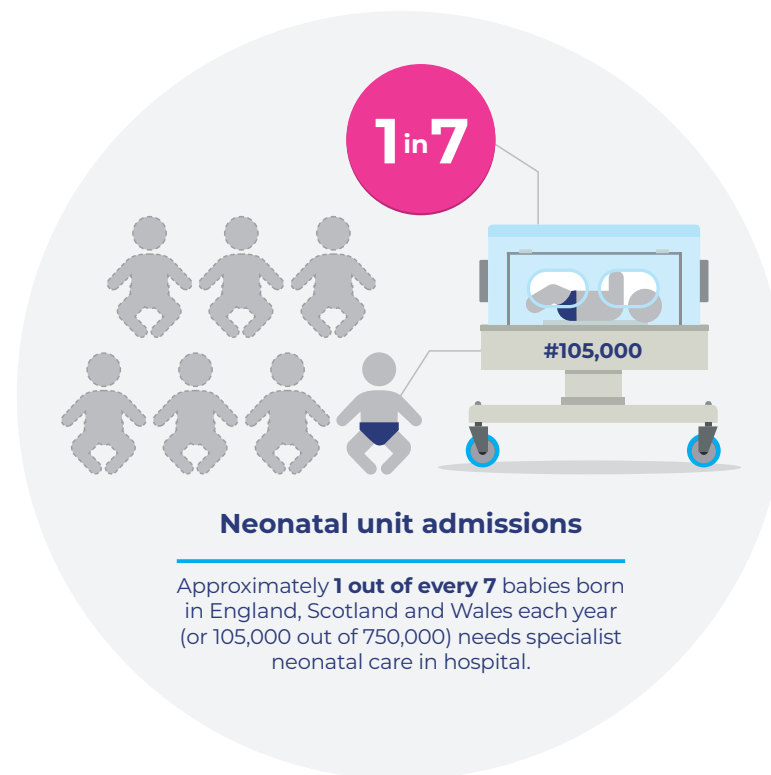
Rachel Corry, Caroline Hogan and Patrick Tully
NNAP Parent Representatives

Neonatal care

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Around 1 out of every 7 babies born in England, Scotland and Wales will need neonatal care. This is because they are born too early, with a low birth weight or have a medical condition that needs specialist treatment.

A baby may need their breathing monitored or need extra breathing support. A baby may have an infection and need antibiotics, or have other medical conditions. The length of a baby's stay in a neonatal unit varies from days, to weeks or months, depending on their needs.



What is the National Neonatal Audit Programme?

It is important that the standards of care provided by neonatal units are regularly checked.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) does this through the National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP)

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The National Neonatal Audit Programme helps neonatal units to give better care to babies who need specialist treatment.

We look at whether babies receive consistent, high quality care. We look at whether babies have had the health checks recommended for them, to reduce the risk of complications, and we check how well babies are doing following this care.

We use information about your baby's care to help neonatal units in England, Wales and Scotland to improve the care and outcomes for other babies.

Neonatal unit staff enter your baby's information onto a secure electronic record system. The NNAP team does not have access to any information that could identify individual babies, and no babies are identified in our reports.

To find out more, you can read our leaflet Your baby's information available at www.rcpch.ac.uk/nnap



What areas of care does the NNAP focus on?

The NNAP 2018 report on 2017 data looked at several areas of care for premature and sick babies, covered by 17 audit measures.

The areas we focused on were chosen by a group of experts including nurses and doctors, supported by parents.

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In this leaflet, we give more detail about the measures that are most relevant to parents and families of babies in neonatal care. These are:

- Antenatal steroids
- Antenatal magnesium sulphate
- Temperature on admission
- Consultation with parents
- Parents on ward rounds
- Retinopathy of prematurity screening
- Measuring rates of infection
- Breastmilk feeding at discharge home
- Follow-up at two years of age

These measures were chosen because they are particularly important for the development and wellbeing of babies, and the experience of their families.

You can find our full list of measures at: www.rcpch.ac.uk/about-nnap

If you want to find out more after reading this leaflet, you can view the full NNAP report on 2017 data and information about each hospital on NNAP Online at: www.nnap.rcpch.ac.uk

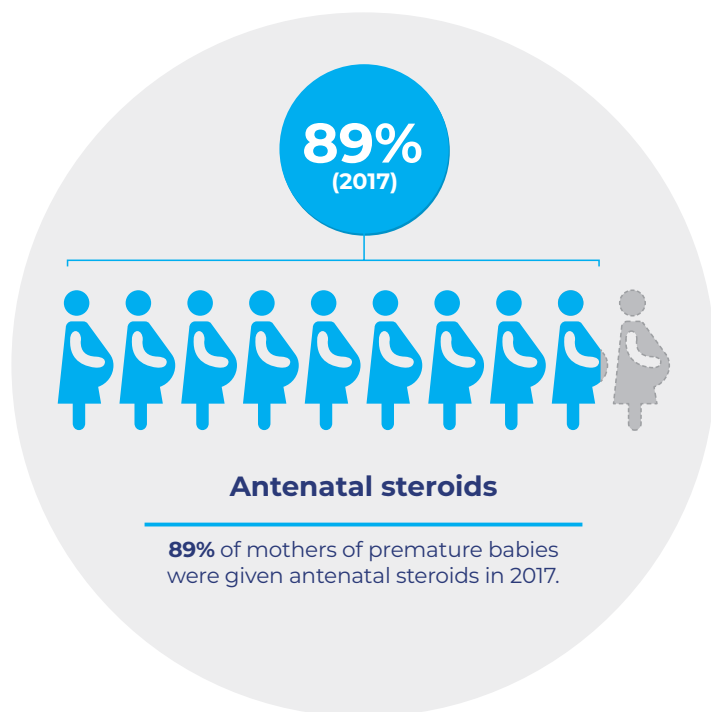
Antenatal steroids

Question:

Is a mother who delivers a baby between 24 and 34 weeks gestational age inclusive, given at least one dose of antenatal steroids?

Babies born at less than 34 weeks gestational age sometimes have breathing difficulties in the first few days after they are born.

Giving antenatal steroids to mothers who are about to give birth early can help to reduce breathing difficulties in baby, and make other serious problems less likely.



Antenatal magnesium sulphate

Question:

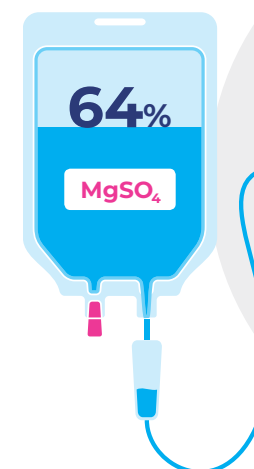
Is a mother who delivers a baby below 30 weeks gestational age, given magnesium sulphate in the 24 hours prior to delivery?

Giving magnesium sulphate to mothers who have given birth early reduces the chance that their baby will develop cerebral palsy, a lifelong condition that affects movement and coordination.

It is recommended that all mothers that may give birth at less than 30 weeks gestational age are offered this treatment.



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Antenatal magnesium sulphate

Magnesium sulphate was given to 64% of women who delivered at less than 30 weeks of gestation.

Temperature on admission

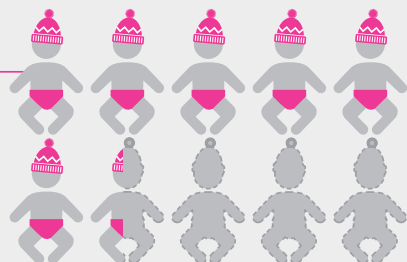
Question:

Does an admitted baby born at less than 32 weeks gestational age have its first measured temperature of 36.5°C to 37.5°C within one hour of birth?

Babies who are born very early get cold easily after birth. Being cold can make babies more unwell.

Doctors and nurses on the neonatal unit need to know a baby's temperature as soon as they are born, so that they can prevent these babies from getting cold.

64%
36.5–37.5°C



Temperature on admission

In 2017, **64%** of babies born at less than 32 weeks gestation were admitted with a temperature within the recommended range of 36.5–37.5°C.

Consultation with parents

Question:

Is there a documented consultation with parents by a senior member of the neonatal team within 24 hours of a baby's first admission?

It is important that families understand and are involved in the care of their baby.

We look at whether parents have talked to a senior member of the neonatal team within the first 24 hours of their baby's admission.

In this first consultation, the senior staff member can meet the parents and listen to their concerns. They can explain how their baby is being cared for and respond to any questions.

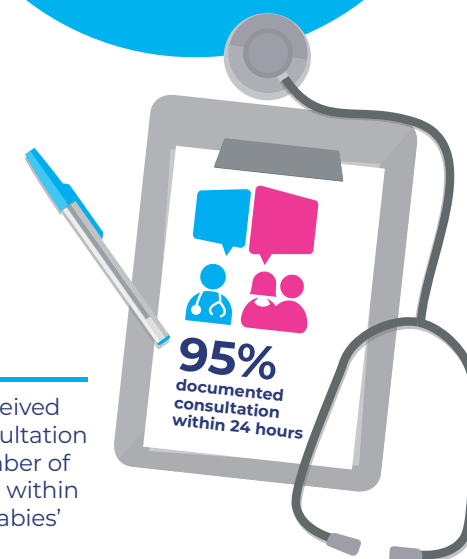
What can you do?

If you feel that you haven't had an early consultation with a member of the neonatal team you can ask your baby's nurse to arrange one.

At this meeting, you can talk about how you can work in partnership with the neonatal team to look after your baby.

Consultation with parents

95% of parents received documented consultation with a senior member of the neonatal team within 24 hours of their babies' admission in 2017.



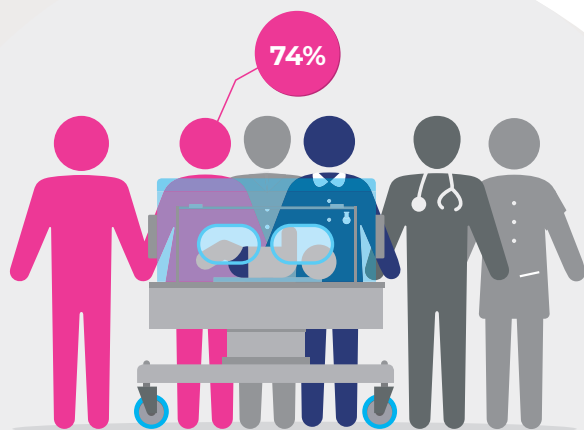
Parents on ward rounds

Question:

For a baby admitted for more than 24 hours, did at least one parent attend a consultant ward round?

Neonatal intensive care is very stressful for babies and parents and it is important that families understand and are involved in the care of their baby.

Including parents in consultant ward rounds, which will occur regularly on neonatal units, can help to develop a partnership in care between parents and the neonatal team.



Parental presence at consultant ward rounds

In **74%** of admissions, parents were present on a consultant ward round on at least one occasion during a baby's stay.



What can you do?

You can ask your baby's nurse or a member of the neonatal team if you can be at the consultant ward round.

You can also ask how you can work in partnership with the neonatal team to look after your baby.

Retinopathy of prematurity screening

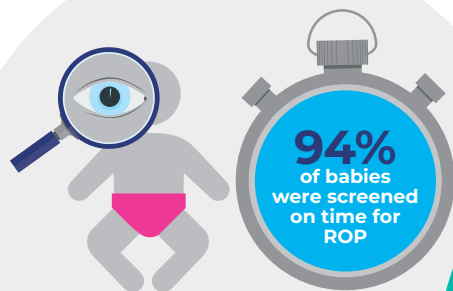
Question:

Does an admitted baby born weighing less than 1501g, or at a gestational age of less than 32 weeks, undergo the first retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) screening in accordance with the NNAP interpretation of the current guideline recommendations?

Babies born very early or with a very low birth weight are at risk of a condition called retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). ROP affects the blood vessels at the back of the eyes and can lead to loss of vision.

It can usually be stopped by treating it early. Screening babies for ROP at the right time is important to help babies have the best vision in the future.

A national guideline says when this screening should be done. We look at how successful neonatal services are in achieving 'on time' screening.



Screening for retinopathy of prematurity (ROP)

ROP screening was done on time for **94%** of babies in 2017.

What can you do?

Find out from the neonatal team whether ROP screening is relevant for your baby, and when your baby's screening is due. If your baby's screening is due after being discharged from the unit, make sure you can attend the appointment.

Find out whether there are any follow-up appointments you will need to attend.

Measuring rates of infection on neonatal units

Sick and premature babies are more likely to get an infection from germs, including some that are normally harmless to healthy people.

Infections can make a baby's stay in the neonatal unit longer and may worsen the long term developmental outlook for babies.

Neonatal unit staff and parents can help to reduce the risk of infection by careful attention and good practice, for example hand washing before coming into contact with baby.

To look for infection in babies, neonatal staff may take a blood sample, or a sample of fluid from the spine. If germs grow in this blood sample, it is known as a positive blood culture.

In the NNAP, we measure rates of bloodstream infection based on the number of positive blood cultures.



Breastmilk feeding at discharge home

Question:

Does a baby born at less than 33 weeks gestational age receive any of their own mother's milk at discharge home from the neonatal unit?

Having breastmilk helps prevent infection and bowel problems in premature babies, and improves longer term health and development.

Premature or unwell babies may not be ready to be fed from their mother's breast straight away, but mothers can express milk for their baby.

It is important that neonatal staff give you practical support to help you express milk if you choose to, and to get feeding established, ready for going home.

60%
(2017)



Mother's milk at discharge

60% of eligible babies were receiving mother's milk; either exclusively or with another form of feeding, at the time of their discharge from neonatal care in 2017.

What can you do?

Ask staff in your unit how they can support you with breastfeeding and expressing milk, and for advice about other organisations that offer support.



Follow-up at two years of age

Question:

Does a baby born at less than 30 weeks gestational age receive medical follow up at two years gestationally corrected age?

It is important that a paediatrician or neonatologist (specialist doctors in the care of children and babies) checks the development of very premature babies after they leave the neonatal unit.

We look at whether there is a documented follow-up consultation at two years of age for babies born at less than 30 weeks gestational age.

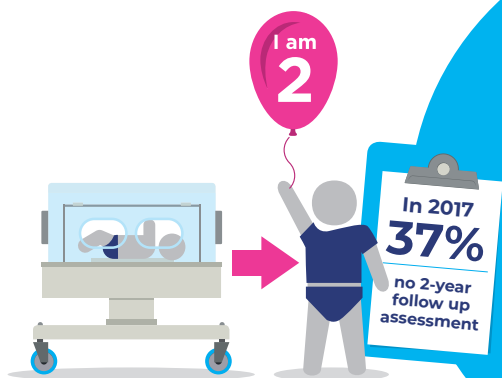
This consultation looks for any problems with movement, the senses, delays in development or other health problems.

Babies born very early can have these problems more often than those born at full term. It is important that those involved in the care of premature babies know how the babies are developing as they get older.

What can you do?

Stay in touch with the neonatal unit you're discharged from and find out when and where follow-up appointments will take place.

Going to all follow-up appointments means you can get reassurance about how your baby is developing, and get any support your baby might need for their development.



Your unit's NNAP results

You can look for your unit's NNAP posters, which we encourage them to display on the wall.

These posters show you the unit's NNAP results, national results, and what your unit is doing in response to their NNAP results.

Where there are opportunities for improvement, units are encouraged to put together an action plan.

You can view the full National Neonatal Audit Programme report and information about each hospital on NNAP Online at www.nnap.rcpch.ac.uk



Find out more about the NNAP

To find out more about the audit and how your baby's information is used to help improve neonatal care, please talk to the staff in your neonatal unit.

You can also contact the project team at: nnap@rcpch.ac.uk

or visit our website: www.rcpch.ac.uk/nnap



& Us is the RCPCH's platform for children, young people and families to help improve child health and healthcare for young patients.

Join **&Us** and help make the NHS a better place: www.rcpch.ac.uk/and_us



Bliss is the UK charity working to ensure that every baby born premature or sick in the UK has the best chance of survival and quality of life.

Bliss fully supports the National Neonatal Audit Programme.

For more information on Bliss please visit: www.bliss.org.uk

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The National Neonatal Audit Programme is commissioned by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) as part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP). HQIP is led by a consortium of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the Royal College of Nursing and National Voices.

Its aim is to promote quality improvement in patient outcomes, and in particular, to increase the impact that clinical audit, outcome review programmes and registries have on healthcare quality in England and Wales.

HQIP holds the contract to commission, manage and develop the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP), comprising around 40 projects covering care provided to people with a wide range of medical, surgical and mental health conditions. The programme is funded by NHS England, the Welsh Government and, with some individual projects, other devolved administrations and crown dependencies. www.hqip.org.uk/national-programmes.



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and Child Health**

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