

Prepping for Discharge Day

- Start bringing home any blankets, outfits, incubator decorations ahead of time.
- Collect and gather all items the nurses, respiratory therapists and therapists try to give you; specialized pacifiers, syringes, tubing, cannulas. More than likely these items will be provided by insurance and/or Medicaid but trust us, when you first get home, you'll wish you had all those specialized items at your fingertips and realize you don't really have time to sit down and order them.
- Ask your doctor if prescriptions can be given ahead of time so they can be filled prior to Discharge Day.
- Ask your doctor if your baby qualifies for a temporary handicapped hang tag (this is often the case for babies going home on medical equipment). If so, find your Department of Motor Vehicles website (DMV Offices can be found here: http://www.safemotorist.com/DMV_Locations.aspx) to find out more information on obtaining a tag and where possible, to download the required form directly from the website. You will want to complete this form prior to discharge day and take it to your child's doctor for signature.
- Consider a thank you to the doctors and nurses and the rest of the NICU staff:
 - a sweet treat (homemade, store-bought – chocolate and coffee products are always a big hit with medical staff)
 - a card with a handwritten message from you saying thank you to the team and to specific individuals who went out of their way to help you and your family
 - a photo of your baby (especially if you have any taken with specific staff members)
 - a bouquet of flowers (from a store, from your garden – again it is the delight of a surprise that matters most, not the money spent).
- Pick out a special “going home” outfit for your baby. You might also consider giving this special task to one of the new grandparents or a new aunt in the family if they are interested.
- See if you can get a list of the specialists that saw your child in the NICU so you can set up follow-up appointments prior to the homecoming.
- In setting up the nursery, prepare for the possibility of medical equipment such as an oxygen tank, apnea monitor and more in the nursery.
- If you have a multi-floor living space, consider having the main diaper changing station in the nursery but also having special diaper-changing baskets stationed throughout on each floor. These can be simple baskets or shoe boxes with a few diapers, some diaper rash cream, and a small pack of wipes.
- Gladly accept donations of meals from family and friends and religious and community organizations. Make sure to assign a Team Captain to get this properly done for you. We recommend www.LotsaHelpingHands.com as a great website to get the word out and keep things super-organized. Also use our “Team Captain” sheet to prep your team captain for your needs.

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