

FROM THE NICU TO HOME

Tips for a Smooth Transition

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Bringing your preemie home can be overwhelming. It's okay to take a moment to just breathe. Taking care of you means you can take care of your baby better. Our **Care Packages** offer helpful information for all stages of the prematurity journey.

"It seems that self care is last on the list but it should always be a priority." - Jessica

ASK FOR HELP

Going home with a preemie isn't easy and it's okay to ask for help. Make sure that you have people around you to talk with. Also, be sure to find out what services your child may qualify for, such as Early Intervention, NICU Follow Up Clinic, etc. Our **Preemie Parent Mentor Program** connects new preemie parents to speak to other parents that have faced a similar prematurity journey.

"There is so much more to worry about with a preemie because of all you've been through. PTSD in NICU parents is real. Don't be afraid to ask for help." - Kristina

WRITE IT DOWN

Start a notebook to help you keep track of everything, such as schedules, medicines, questions, doctor's appointments, etc. It's helpful to be able to track feedings, diaper changes and weight measurements in those first weeks home. Our **MyPreemie app** is a great way to stay organized.

"The notebook gave me peace of mind that I wasn't going to forget an important detail when it was time to discuss it with the medical team." - Amber

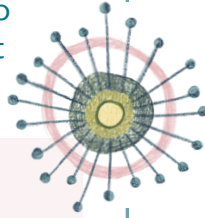
BEING WORRIED IS NORMAL

Leaving the security of the NICU and caring for your baby yourself can be challenging. Fear of re-admission, illness, or other potential challenges that your baby may face can be overwhelming once you're home. It's okay to be concerned. Give yourself time to adjust to the new routine and find a pediatrician that you trust. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

"The NICU told us that they would not be sending my son home if they didn't think he would be okay without support. I was terrified of having the feeding tube come loose and fall out. It did and I was able to put it back in. We practiced at the hospital tons of times with the nurses watching before we were discharged, practicing on a dummy and on my son." - Laura

JUST SAY NO

It's okay to tell people, even family and friends, "no" if they want to touch or hold the baby. You are your baby's greatest advocate. If a large family gathering is too overwhelming or stressful, you are well within your rights as a parent to limit that exposure. Baby's health is the highest priority.



"I am a people pleaser and I didn't want anyone's feelings hurt, but I knew my preemie's health was most important and I needed to advocate for her even if it meant telling my family and friends they couldn't meet her until she was older." - Jessica

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Coming home without monitors can be scary. But trust yourself, watch your baby and focus on how they're doing. You know your baby better than anyone else.

"The best advice a nurse gave me was to watch the baby while eating. Learning to trust my 'parenting gut' has proven the best advice for my kids' and my sanity. It just takes time." - Jaime

YOUR BABY IS A FIGHTER

Your baby has already made it through a difficult time and is ready to come home. Recognize that your baby may be stronger than you realize.

"When we transitioned home, the NICU nurses told us that our baby was not as fragile as we thought. Be protective and be smart but don't treat her like she's made of glass. Enjoy your time as a family! - Maurie H

ALL OF OUR PREEMIE PARENT
SUPPORT SERVICES ARE COMPLIMENTARY.
FIND MORE HELPFUL INFORMATION AT
GRAHAMSFUNDATION.ORG

Graham's Foundation is a charitable organization whose mission is to support, comfort, inform, and guide families that experience a premature birth. The information we provide is meant to encourage and support parents during and after a NICU stay. It is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of medical professionals.



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