

Memory making on the Neonatal Unit (NNU)

What is memory making?

Having a baby in the NNU can be a difficult and anxious time as a parent, especially if your baby is seriously unwell or in hospital for a long time. Days can easily become dominated by the changing medical needs of your baby and the routines on the unit.

Memory making helps you to bond with your baby and creates positive activities that you can do together as a family.

It is totally your choice if and how you are involved in making memories with your baby. Every person is different, and there is no right way to get involved.

Your bedside nurse is the best person to talk to about how to start, so please ask.

How you can get involved with memory making

Photos

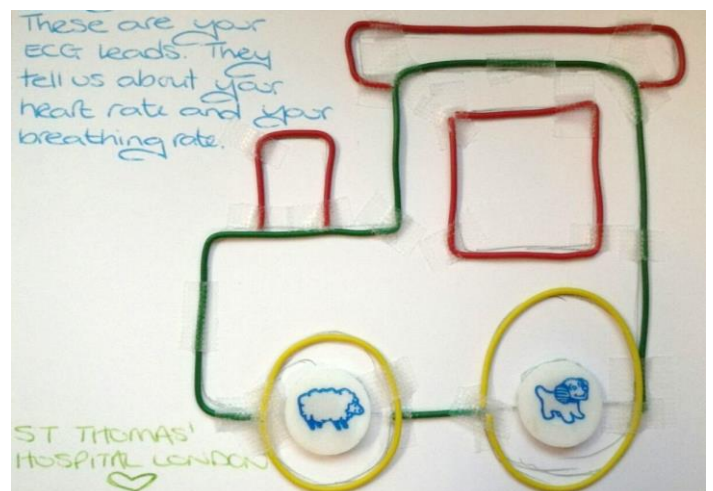
Photos are an important part of creating memories to look back on. Some families find it helpful to print some pictures to keep at home, to give to family and friends or to put up at the cotside. Taking a photo each day is also a good way of documenting progress and being able to reflect back on how your baby has changed.

There are a camera and printer available on the NNU to print a photo for you to keep of your baby on their first day of life.

You can ask staff to take photos of you and your baby together, and of your involvement with their care (such as giving a feed, changing a nappy or reading them a story).

Memory boxes

Every baby admitted to the NNU has a small cardboard memory box by the cotside. This can be used to store mementos or keepsakes of your baby's time on the unit. These might include name bands, a breathing support hat, knitted square, monitoring leads or admission cards.



Please speak with your baby's nurse if your baby does not yet have a memory box, or to ask them to make sure that something is kept safely for their box.

Journals

Each day in the NNU can bring new challenges, and many parents find it helpful to keep a bedside journal to write down their thoughts from each day to keep track of their baby's journey.

Footprints

Your bedside nurse can help you take prints of your baby's feet with an ink pad and card.

You are also welcome to bring in your own ink/footprint templates to use. Some parents enjoy making cards using these footprints to give to siblings, family or friends. Here are some examples



Celebrating milestones

It is really important to celebrate milestones for your baby on the NNU, however small they seem. These might include your baby gaining weight or coming off a piece of equipment, or perhaps their first bath, cuddle or breastfeed. Lots of parents also celebrate dates such as their due date (for premature babies), or reaching a particular time point after birth.

We have some milestone cards on the unit for you to use. You can also bring your own and use them as a basis for photos.

Sources of more information

Bliss, for information and sources of support for parents of babies on a neonatal unit, [web](http://www.bliss.org.uk): www.bliss.org.uk



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your baby, please speak to the medical or nursing team looking after your baby, or contact the NNU main reception, [phone](tel:02071884045): 020 7188 4045. The address of the unit is: Neonatal Unit, 6th floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH.

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [web](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets): www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch, [phone](tel:02071888815): 020 7188 8815 [email](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk): languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk



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