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Family News



The NICU Family News is produced by the Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC) Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Family Advisory Council (FAC). It is designed to provide you with information we hope you will find useful during and after your family's stay in the NICU.

DID YOU KNOW...

... over 2 million germs can live on your cell phone/camera at any one time. Always keep your phone/electronic devices in a plastic protective bag (available at the NICU entrance desk) at all times in the NICU and wash and gel your hands often to reduce germs.

■ ■ **Saint Barnabas Medical Center**
■ ■ **Barnabas Health**

The SBMC NICU is now on Facebook
www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU 

94 Old Short Hills Road, Livingston, NJ 07039
1-888-724-7123 barnabashealth.org/sbmc

Indoor Winter Activities

Here are some great ideas our graduate NICU parents had to keep warm and indoors with the kids last winter. Some don't require leaving home at all and others are good for a day trip or even a few hours indoors away from home. Let's hope we don't need too many of them this winter!!

Without leaving home at all:

- Cooking and baking are always fun. We love making Chewy Granola Bars. We have even made edible play doh (recipes on the internet).
- Artbox - keep a scrapbook sized plastic box filled with different arts and crafts things to take out and use as needed. Be creative and open minded when filling it before the weather gets bad.
- It might sound crazy but we blew up a bouncy house in the basement last year. You can usually find reasonably priced ones online or at the big discount stores (Target, Costco, BJ's)
- The wii or xbox can be fun for kids of all ages and wii fit or dancing games can really get you all moving.
- We love playing good old fashioned board games (candyland...) and card games (go fish..) while sipping big mugs of hot chocolate with marshmallows.
- Set up an indoor obstacle course in one room or through several. Use large blocks, blue painters tape and anything else you can think of to create the course (with the kids of course)!
- Build a tent out of furniture and sheets/blankets and have a "slumber party" during the day. Put on your jammies, bring in sleeping bags, popcorn and some books or devices with movies and enjoy!

Go to an indoor activity:

- Story time at the local library or local book store are fun and sometimes even have a costumed story character (free).
- How about bowling? Don't forget to ask them to block the gutters for the kids so they can actually knock down some pins!
- **The Connection** in Summit has Drop in and Play sessions (for ages 6 months to 5 years old) every day - times vary, must be accompanied by an adult. <http://www.theconnectiononline.org> (\$5.00 daily passes available at the Front Desk, non-members welcome)
- **Kidz Village** in Kenilworth is clean and the kids love it. It's an indoor playground and "fun center" for climbing and exploration for kids ages 10 and under. (about \$11 per child / adults free)
<http://www.kidzvillage.com>

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Interview With NICU Neonatologist Amelia Bautista, MD

Q: How long have you been working in the NICU here?

A: I started working as an associate in this NICU in 2001, working mostly nights and weekends. Then, I moved into my full time position here four years ago. Before that I was a neonatologist at United Hospital in Newark, which closed, and then at Our Lady of Lourdes in Camden.

Q: How did you know you wanted to be a NICU doctor?

A: Actually, I really didn't but an early mentor guided me into neonatology and kept after me to keep with it. Now I work here with her; Dr. Kamtorn.

Q: What are some of your responsibilities in the NICU?

A: Most importantly, we are responsible for the resuscitation of the delicate neonates that need our help to survive. We are here to improve their chances for survival and to go home with their families.

Q: What do you like most about your job?

A: I like the doctors and nurses I work with and the mutual support we give each other as we work towards a common goal. I also really like seeing the outcome of our work when the babies get to go home with their happy families. That makes me proud, when I see a baby who has been here a few months and they have grown and met all their health goals here and the parents finally get to take them home.

Q: Have you seen any beneficial changes in the NICU since you have worked here?

A: Yes, I have seen major improvements here in the care and survival of the real micro-preemies. Our 22-24 weekers are doing quite well compared to other hospitals in the state and even the country and have a much better outlook than they did years ago.

Q: What does Family Centered Care in the NICU mean to you?

A: FCC in the NICU means involving the parent and family in caring for the baby. Making them part of the team and communicating to them what is going on.



Amelia Bautista, MD

Q: What suggestions or advice do you have for NICU families?

A: To remember that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel and they won't be alone. We will work together to get their baby bigger and stronger and healthy enough to go home with them.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?

A: I am blessed to be the mother of three grown children and have one little grandson and will become a grandmother again soon.

On October 5, 2014, the 14th annual Miracle Walk, to benefit the SBMC NICU, was held in Verona Park. Approximately 2,000 participants enjoyed the event and helped raise over \$350,000 for the NICU.

**Save-The-Date: 15th Annual Miracle Walk
To Benefit the SBMC NICU
Sunday, 10/5/15
Verona Park, Verona, NJ**

MIRACLEWALK.COM ■ 973-322-4259 ■ FACEBOOK.COM/MIRACLEWALK

Not One and Done!

We thought we were “one and done” after our first experience of having a child. Well at least my husband did. I felt I got cheated out of the experience of being and feeling pregnant. The big belly, the maternity clothes, the effort it took to roll over at night during the last month.

My son Maximus (we needed a strong name for such a little guy) was born at 26 weeks 1 lb., 5 oz. I just started to look pregnant when my feet started swelling up. I went to the doctor on a Thursday they did some tests. I went back for the results on Tuesday and learned that I had preeclampsia and was sent straight to SBMC. After several days in and out of the hospital and two painful steroid shots, what turned out to be preeclampsia turned into full blown eclampsia. The doctors decided to deliver and my son was born on Monday at 26 weeks 2 days.

We spent 80 days of ups and downs in the NICU; the fear, the emotional roller coaster, and medical roller coaster of good days and bad. He spent the majority of his time on a nasal cannula. His nurses were so attentive to his need for oxygen. As first time parents of a NICU baby the beeping of the monitors was overwhelming. My son was a fighter and my real life miracle. He had a PDA that closed on its own after many weeks of ultrasounds and discussions with the doctors of whether or not to operate. But they were wise enough to wait it out and it closed on its own.

The care, expertise, and good statistics SBMC’s NICU has was one of the factors that gave me the courage to get pregnant again. I had faith that if it happened again the knowledgeable doctors and nurses would be there to help. I wanted the second chance knowing I had the safety net of the NICU underneath me. So even at the age of 41, with my OB saying there was a 1 in 3 chance it would happen again, I took the chance and got pregnant again. I was monitored very

closely throughout the pregnancy by both my OB and the high risk doctors at NJ Perinatal. They put me on a



daily baby aspirin for the preeclampsia and on thyroid medication as well. I remember getting to 26 then 27 weeks. Like the saying goes if you want to know “the

value of a week” ask a pregnant woman. Every visit to my doctor was a new experience. I felt I had missed out on my first pregnancy so I was glad to have gotten the chance to experience it my second time around. As a precaution my doctor put me on bed rest for the last 7 weeks. My daughter was born at 37 weeks, 6 lbs. 5oz. and every aspect of her birth was a completely different experience. From walking myself into the delivery room as opposed to being rushed in, to rooming in with her at the hospital as opposed to being wheeled to the NICU to see my baby in an incubator, breastfeeding as opposed to pumping, to going home with her at the end of my hospital stay.

In the end they were two different experiences, both with happy endings. I knew nothing about the NICU or premature babies so it was a whole new scary world for me. But, it was a world filled with success stories that gave me the strength to try again.

-Lillian C.

Important Phone Numbers:

- NICU
973-322-5300
- NICU Step-down (3100)
973-322-5310
- NICU Nurse Manager
973-322-8938
- NICU Social Workers
973-322-5503 or 8408
- NICU Case Managers
973-322-2045
973-322-2678
- Birth Certificate Office
973-322-5327
- Lactation Consultants
973-322-5684
- NICU High Risk Infant
Follow-Up Program
973-322-2631

Want to Help the Family Advisory Council?

The FAC is made up of graduate parents dedicated to helping new NICU parents. We meet monthly to discuss ways to do this. We're always looking for recent graduate parents to share their experiences and ideas to make our NICU the best it can be. We welcome your ideas and participation. Contacts:

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Indoor Winter Activities continued

- **Imagine That!!!** children's museum in Florham Park is a big hit with our little ones (about \$11 for kids and \$10 for adults) <http://imaginethatmuseum.com>
- **Lifetime Fitness** in Florham Park and Berkeley Heights have a great kids playroom/childcare for kids to use while parents workout. They also have a great indoor pool for family swim but you have to be a member. www.lifetimefitness.com
- **Camden Aquarium** is a great day trip. There are exhibits for all ages and its huge so lots to see. (about \$19 for kids and \$26 for adults, more if you want to see a 4D movie) www.adventureaquarium.com
- **The Liberty Science Center** has all different kinds of exhibits for kids (and adults) of many ages. (about \$16 for kids and \$20 for adults, more if you want to see a 3D or IMAX movie) <http://lsc.org>
- **The Morris Museum** in Morristown has several great permanent exhibits and many great special exhibits come in the winter as well around the holidays. (Adults \$10, ages 3-12 \$7 and under 3 free) www.morrismuseum.org
- **SkyZone** in Pinebrook is a blast with the kids. It's an indoor trampoline park that's generally geared towards bigger kids but they also have toddler time hours on the weekends and Tuesdays and Thursdays. (fees are based on how long you jump for so check the website) www.skyzone.com/pinebrook

Follow the NICU on Facebook www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU

In recent months, with the help of the hospital, the NICU Family Advisory Council has created a Facebook page aimed at parents here in our NICU and beyond.



The Facebook page was developed in response to our NICU graduates who have said it would be helpful to have a place to share information and ask questions of other NICU families upon leaving the NICU as well as during the first months and years at home. The page has numerous personal stories and information and tips that might be helpful. If you have something to share or just want to check it out, please go to www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU and like it today!