

Coping with Visitation Restrictions

Additional restrictions on visitation are being made at all hospitals trying to control the spread of COVID-19. It is extremely difficult and distressing for parents to be separated from a child receiving hospital care. Every effort is being made to keep your child safe and to minimize the necessary separation. Other family members also find restricted visitation difficult, and parents may already face separation from supportive people in their lives due to COVID-19. It is important to recognize that this situation is temporary and there are actions you can take to help your family cope with this crisis. Some suggestions are included below, and we will continue to add information and suggestions as the situation changes:

- If you are not able to be with your baby, talk with your NICU about how they can support you.
- Make sure the NICU has ready contact for you to give you updates and involve you in decisions.
- Request assistance with arranging video contact for you with the baby. Some hospitals have video conferencing capability at the bedside. The visiting parent may be able to use a phone during the visit to share using live video conferencing.
- Have daily pictures taken and keep these in a folder together so that you can watch your baby change over the course of the NICU stay.
- Record your voice talking to your baby or reading a simple story and provide it for your baby.
- Recognize that the recently increasing limitations on physical connection are adding to your distress. Maintain close communication with the people who are most important to you emotionally, and find ways to continue daily communication with these important people in your life.
- Make a plan for how you will be able to increase your visitation as restrictions start to lift. Use this time to anticipate what you will need when your baby comes home and start to put things in place so that you will be ready.
- Keep a daily journal and write down things you want to say to your baby when you are able to visit.
- It is normal for parents to feel overwhelmed under such extreme circumstances. Please let the NICU social worker when you feel you need help coping. **IF YOU ARE IN GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL OR AN EMORY HOSPITAL, YOU CAN ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER TO HELP YOU SCHEDULE TO SPEAK WITH AN EMORY PSYCHOLOGIST.**