



# Happy Fathers Day

**Enjoy the small moments today.  
Big journeys begin with small feet and tiny steps.**

Fathers day is a day for families to get together, be together and make memories. We understand that today's experience will be different to what you would have planned – while you would love to have your child home on this day, rest assured that the neonatal unit is the very best place for the care of your baby (or babies, in the case of multiples).

**Wishing you all the very best on Fathers Day 2017.**

The Neonatal Trust exists to 'make a difficult start to life that little bit easier'. We hope that this message and wee package provides a bright spot for you.

# Tips for Dads



**Becoming a new dad can bring joy but fathers often have a difficult role when their baby is born sick or prematurely. The experience can leave dads feeling torn juggling the demands of their new baby/babies, partner and other children while still having to deal with other financial responsibilities. You may feel many mixed emotions after the birth and worry for your baby and partner as this is not how you expected the journey to begin.**

Whilst we recognise everyone is different, and react to stress differently, here are a few tips from other dads who have travelled this journey.

While in the unit:

## **Start a blog.**

Keeping everyone in the loop with what is going on and your baby's progress can be rather time consuming and being able to do something tangible can be a great outlet for emotions. An idea is to start a blog so that friends and family members can all be updated at once. You may find it easier to ask a trusted IT literate friend to help you set this up and they could relay the information for you.

## **Skin to Skin (Kangaroo cuddles).**

When the doctors give the all clear, kangaroo cuddles are a great way to bond with your baby. Holding your baby for the first time can be an amazing but scary experience, he/she is tiny and fragile but the nursing staff will be there to help you. You can read more about the benefits of kangaroo cuddles here.

## **Read to your baby.**

This might sound crazy but reading a book to your baby is a one on one special experience which has real benefits to your child. It exposes your baby to the sound of your voice which is soothing and helps with bonding. Research shows the more a baby is read to when they are younger the larger their vocabulary will be.

## **Be hands on.**

It can be difficult to feel connected to your baby. Being hands on with the care of him/her is a good way to build confidence. The nursing staff will be able to show you the best way to help with changing nappies, bathing and tube feeding. It's important to note that premature/sick babies can be over stimulated and stressed easily so it's a good idea to check with the nurse to see how much activity your baby can handle.

## **Ask questions / stay informed.**

A neonatal unit can be a world of unfamiliar medical terms and acronyms. There really is no such thing as a silly question and the more informed you are the better you will feel about the decisions you need to make. A good starting point is the glossary in the 'What to expect' booklet produced by The Neonatal Trust.

To access the full list and our other resources, please head to:  
[www.neonataltrust.org.nz/support](http://www.neonataltrust.org.nz/support)