

Supporting Dads in the NICU: Tips for Partners

It can be hard to balance the wellbeing of your relationship while your baby is in the NICU. While dads often try to appear strong, they're worried, too. Avoid letting the stress of the situation create a wedge between you two. Instead, remember to work through this period together as a team.

1

Check in with your partner. You can say something like, "I know all the focus has been on the baby, how are you doing?"

2

Acknowledge that your experiences may be different, and that's okay. You are on the same team.

3

Support dad in having skin-to-skin contact with the baby, and involve them in care and feeding. This may help them to embrace their parental role and form a strong bond with the baby.

4

Recognize that every parent has a different comfort level with caring for a medically fragile infant. Try not to judge, and offer gentle encouragement to be involved.

5

Connect with one another by watching a movie at home, having a cafeteria date night, or taking a brief walk around the hospital while your baby sleeps.

6

Speak up if you are concerned about your partner's mental health. Let them know that you are worried and offer to ask the NICU team for resources.

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