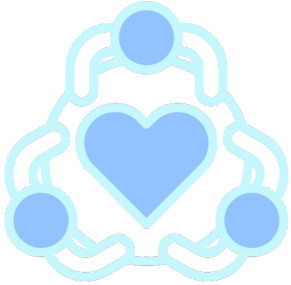


SELF-CARE TIPS FOR NICU FAMILIES

Ask for Support

Join a support group for NICU caregivers (online or in person) to connect with those going through similar experiences.



Identify areas where support could make life easier—big or small.

- ▶ Ask a neighbor to pick up your mail.
- ▶ Ask another parent to host a playdate with your older child.
- ▶ Have a friend bring coffee.
- ▶ Let in-laws run an errand.
- ▶ Let your older child help with chores.

Set boundaries around what you share and who you share with. See our [“Sharing Your NICU Story”](#) tip sheet for more.



Honor Your Feelings

All feelings are valid—even when they feel conflicting, like sadness and joy.

Allow yourself to experience each emotion without judgment.

Celebrate the “small” wins.



Find Moments for Yourself

Pause, even for a few minutes. Simple acts of self care can nurture your mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.



- ▶ Take a walk
- ▶ Watch your favorite show
- ▶ Read
- ▶ Take a nap
- ▶ Hydrate
- ▶ Eat a nutritious meal



Document Your Journey

You can keep a record for yourself or share it later with your child or loved ones. Even if you do not want to look at it now, recording your journey allows you to eventually process and honor your family's story.

Write letters



Create a photo album



Journal



Take videos



Set Realistic Expectations

Give yourself grace as you adjust. Treat yourself with the same compassion you would offer a friend.

"I'm going through a lot right now. Feeling frustrated or overwhelmed is normal."

"I can't control this, but I can be gentle with myself."

"I can't be in the NICU 24/7 and that's okay. I'm doing my best."



Remember, you are not alone in this journey.

If you have feelings of sadness and worry that persist over a long time or find yourself unable to do any of the strategies above, we encourage you to talk to your health care provider.

