

Preemie Care Glossary of NICU Terms

The PreemieCare glossary currently contains 205 acronyms and terms.

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>ABR</u>	(see Auditory Brainstem Response Test)	
Adjusted Age	Also known as corrected age, is a term used most appropriately to describe children up to 3 years of age who were born preterm, "corrected age" or "adjusted age" is calculated by subtracting the number of weeks born before 40 weeks of gestation from the chronological age.	Gaining and Growing: Assuring the Nutritional Care of Preterm Infants: Calculating Corrected Age
<u>AFDC</u>	(see <u>Aid to Families with Dependent Children</u>)	
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)	A government subsidized program that offers financial assistance to eligible families. Ask your social worker for additional information on this and other programs you may be eligible for.	US Office of Health and Human Services: Family Assistance PreemieCare Financial and Insurance Related Resources
Anemia	One of the more common blood disorders, anemia occurs when the level of healthy red blood cells (RBCs) in the body becomes too low.	Kids Health: Anemia

Apgar Score	A scoring system that helps the physician estimate a baby's general condition at birth. An acronym for A-activity, P-pulse, G-grimace, A-appearance, R-respiration. The test measures a baby's heart rate, breathing, muscle tone, reflex response and color at 1 minute, 5 minutes and 10 minutes of life. Named after its creator, Virginia Apgar, in 1952.	Kids Health: What is an Apgar Score Children's Hospital of Wisconsin: Assessments of Newborn Babies
Apnea	A pause in breathing that lasts longer than 15- 20 seconds. Apnea of Prematurity occurs in infants born before 34 weeks gestation. Because the brain or respiratory system may be immature or underdeveloped, the baby may not be able to regulate his or her own breathing normally.	Kids Health: Apnea of Prematurity Children's Hospital of Stanford: Respiratory Disorders
Aspiration	Inhaling a foreign object, such as food, medicine, or meconium.	Medline Plus: Aspiration
Attending Physician	The physician who has been selected by or assigned to the patient and who has assumed primary responsibility for the treatment and care of the patient.	Law Skills: Definition of Attending Physician PremieCare Medical Professional Resources
Audiologist	A medical professional with 6 years of training who treats patients with hearing, balance, and related ear problems.	US Department of Labor: Audiologists Audiology.net
Auditory Brainstem Response Test (ABR)	A safe and painless method to measure the electrical activity of the cochlear nerve (hearing nerve) and auditory nerve pathways in the brainstem in response to sound.	Diagnostic Auditory Appendix ABR Procedure
Auditory Neuropathy	A condition found in infants to adults who displays auditory characteristics consistent with normal outer hair cell function and abnormal neural function at the level of the VIIIth (vestibulo-cochlear) nerve. These characteristics are observed on clinical audiologic tests as normal otoacoustic emissions (OAEs) in the presence of an absent or severely abnormal auditory brainstem response (ABR).	Auditory Neuropathy Information National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders My Baby's Hearing

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Bagging	Pumping air or oxygen into a baby's lungs by squeezing a bag of air into a mask placed over the baby's mouth and nose, or through an endotracheal tube.	ICU-USA Manual Resuscitation icd-9 Health Information Bag Valve Mask
Beta-methasone	Corticosteroid medication given to the mother before the baby is born to stimulate fetal lung maturation and to decrease the frequency and damage from intracranial hemorrhage in premature infants.	Yahoo Health: Antenatal corticosteroids for fetal lung development
Bilirubin	Bilirubin is a breakdown product of hemoglobin, the substance in blood that carries oxygen. Normally bilirubin passes through the liver and is excreted as bile through the intestines. Jaundice occurs when bilirubin builds up faster than a newborn's liver can break it down and pass it from the body.	WebMD: Bilirubin Healthy Kids: Jaundice in Healthy Newborns
Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure (bipap)	A way to provide adequate oxygen to an infant with sleep apnea	WiseGeek What is BiPAP?
<u>Bipap</u>	(see Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure)	
<u>BPD</u>	(see Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia)	
Bradycardia	A heart rate less than 100, slower than normal for an infant.	Meriter Apnea and Bradycardia of Prematurity
<u>Brain Bleed</u>	(see Intra ventricular Hemorrhage)	
Breast Pump	A machine to collect breast milk without the baby present. A hospital-grade breast pump is often more powerful than those for home use, and may be available for rental.	Mayo Clinic: Choosing a Breast Pump PremieCare Breastfeeding Resources

Broncho-pulmonary Dysplasia (BPD)

A chronic lung disorder that is most common among children who were born prematurely, with low birth weights, and who received prolonged mechanical ventilation.

[Nucleus Medical Art: Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia \(BPD\)](#)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Cannula	A slender tube that can be inserted into a body cavity or duct.	Storknet: Ventilator, CPAP, Nasal Cannula, Etc
Catheter	A hollow flexible tube for insertion into a body cavity, duct, or vessel to allow the passage of fluids or distend a passageway. Its uses include the drainage of urine from the bladder through the urethra or insertion through a blood vessel into the heart for diagnostic purposes.	Your Total Health Catheter
<u>CBC</u>	(see Complete Blood Count)	
<u>CC</u>	(see Cubic Centimeter)	
Central Venous Line	A narrow tube that is placed into a large blood vessel and passed into the opening of the heart. It is used to receive medicine, fluid, and to draw blood.	MedicineNet: Definition of Central venous line
Cerebral Palsy (CP)	Appearing in the first few years of life, this diagnosis means the child will have problems moving parts of their body. The extent of the problem is not always known immediately.	National Organizations of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Cerebral Palsy Information Page
Complete Blood Count (CBC)	Blood test that looks at the number and type of white blood cells, the concentration of hemoglobin, the percentage of blood volume consisting of red blood cells (hematocrit), and the number of platelets.	WebMD: Complete Blood Count
Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)	Pronounced "see Pap," and stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. Through small tubes that fit into the baby's nostrils, called nasal CPAP, this machine pushes a continuous flow of air or oxygen to the airways to help keep tiny air passages in the lungs open.	Kids Health: Apnea of Prematurity

Corrected Age (see **Adjusted Age**)

CP (see **Cerebral Palsy**)

CPAP (see **Continuous Positive Airway Pressure**)

Cubic Centimeter (cc) A metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a liter (a milliliter). There are 30 cc in a fluid ounce. [Village Dosage Conversion Table](#)

Culture A lab test which detects infections in the body by placing samples in a special dish and monitoring them for twenty-four to seventy-two hours. [MedicineNet: Definition of Culture](#)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Developmental Care	Also known as Family-Centered Care, is a term used in NICUs to reduce the stress of the NICU experience on premature babies, including many different practices such as: swaddling, noise levels, skin-to-skin care, Individual Care Plans, parental involvement, positioning for development, expanding visitation policies, lactation support, and music therapy.	Institute for Family Centered Care National Perinatal Assoc. Policy Statement on Developmental Care
Developmental Delays	The failure to meet certain milestones such as rolling, sitting, walking, and talking at the average age.	Prematurity.org: Developmental Follow-up of Pre-term Infants at High Risk for Delays MOST FAQs on Developmental Delays
Developmental Pediatrician	These physicians have ten years of training and specialize in evaluating and treating problems with child development. They assess the level of development of premature infants.	Society of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics SUPERTWINS Magazine article on Developmental Pediatricians

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Early Intervention Program (EI)	Early intervention (EI), also known as Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), refers to services that are provided to children three years of age or younger, who have or might develop a special need that may affect their development.	Kid Source Online: What is Early Intervention Child Development Web's State EI Resource Locator MOST FAQs on Development and EI
Echo-cardiogram	Often referred to as just Echo, is the use of ultrasound to view the structure and function of the heart.	Medline Plus Echocardiogram
<u>ECMO</u>	(see Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation)	
<u>EEG</u>	(see Electroencephalogram)	
<u>EI</u>	(see Early Intervention Program)	
<u>EKG</u>	(see Electrocardiogram)	
<u>ELBW</u>	(see Extremely Low Birth Weight)	
Electro-cardiogram (EKG)	An adhesive patch placed anywhere on the body, and connected by a wire to a monitor, used to detect heart rate, respirations, or blood oxygen levels.	WebMD: Electrocardiogram
Electrodes	A conductor used to make contact with a nonmetallic part of a circuit.	
Electro-encephalogram (EEG)	A noninvasive and painless study, in which electrodes placed on the scalp record the electrical activity of the brain.	The Better Health Channel: Electroencephalogram
Endotracheal Tube (ET Tube)	A tube that is placed down the newborns windpipe and delivers warm humidified air and oxygen to the lungs.	MedicineNet: Endotracheal Intubation
<u>ET Tube</u>	(see Endotracheal Tube)	

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO)

In infants, this machine is usually used to allow the lungs to rest and recover from disease or medical condition. ECMO is similar to the heart-lung bypass used in the operating room but is used for longer periods of time. Also called extracorporeal life support (ECLS).

[Vanderbilt Medical Center Children's Hospital: ECMO Program](#)

Extremely Low Birth Weight (ELBW)

Extremely low birth weight babies refer to infants with a birth weight of less than 1000 grams or 2lbs 3oz.

[UCSF Children's Hospital: Very Low and Extremely Low Birthweight Infants'](#)

Extreme Prematurity

Also known as very, very premature, refers to babies born at less than 28 weeks gestation.

[Answers.com Premature Birth](#)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Failure to Thrive	The failure to gain weight as expected, which is often accompanied by poor height growth.	American Academy of Family Physicians: Failure to Thrive

Family Centered Care

(see Developmental Care)

Fellow

Physician who has completed medical school, internship and a residency, and has chosen to receive very specialized training in one particular treatment or research area.

[Kids Health: Who's Who in the Hospital](#)

[PremieCare Medical Professional Resources](#)

Fontanelle or Fontanel

"Soft spot" between the parts of the baby's skull that will later grow together.

[Parent's Common Sense Encyclopedia: Fontanelle](#)

[Wikipedia: Fontanelle](#)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Gastro-enterologist	A physician with seven years of training in diagnosing and treating diseases of the GI tract and digestive system.	WebMD: Gastroenterologist PremieCare Medical Professional Resources



Gastro-Esophageal Reflux	Also known as Reflux, this occurs when gastric juice from the stomach backs up into the esophagus. Adults refer to this as "heart burn" although it has nothing to do with the heart.	Ask Dr. Sears: GER: What is it, What to do, FAQs
Gastro-Intestinal Tract (GI Tract)	Also called the Digestive Tract or System. The tube that goes from the mouth to the anus where food is digested and eliminated from the body (as a bowel movement).	Answers.com Gastrointestinal Tract
Gavage Feeding	A method of feeding a baby with breast milk or formula before s/he has learned how to swallow. A small flexible tube is placed into a baby's nostril or mouth and passed down into the stomach.	Children's Hospital Boston: Newborn Intensive Care Unit: Nutrition
Gestation	Period of time between fertilization and birth of an animal. In humans 40 weeks is the average gestation for a full-term singleton. Commonly called pregnancy.	Wikipedia: Gestation
GI Tract	(see Gastrointestinal Tract)	
Gram	A metric unit of weight equal to one thousandth of a kilogram. One gram weighs the same as one plain M&M or one small paperclip. There are 30 grams in an ounce.	MOST Grams to Pounds Weight Conversion Tool and Chart

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Hematocrit	The percentage of blood volume consisting of red blood cells. Used as a measure of anemia.	Lab Tests Online: Hematocrit
Hemoglobin	The component of red blood cells that carries oxygen. Used as a measure of anemia.	University of Maryland Medical Center: Hemoglobin
Hernia	The protrusion of an organ or structure into surrounding tissues that shouldn't be there.	Kids Health: Could that Lump be a Hernia?

HFV (see Oscillator)

High Frequency Ventilation (HFV) (see Oscillator)

Hyaline Membrane Disease (see Respiratory Distress Syndrome)

Hydrocephalus A condition where too much fluid collects in the ventricles, exerting increased pressure on the brain and causing the baby's head to expand abnormally. Surgery may be required.

[My Optum Health: Hydrocephalus](#)

[Dr. Trejos: Hydrocephalus FAQ](#)

Hyper-bilirubinemia (see Jaundice)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Ileal Perforation	A hole in the small intestine.	World Journal of Emergency Surgery: Non-traumatic terminal ileal perforation
Incubator/ Isolette	A heat-controlled crib used to maintain a baby's body temperature.	Neonatology Equipment
Inflammation	Pain, redness, and swelling, possibly caused by infection or injury.	Cleveland Clinic Information Center: Inflammation: What you need to know
Infusion Pump	Device that delivers measured amounts of fluids or medications into the bloodstream over a period of time	Neonatology on the Web: Equipment in the NICU
Intrauterine Growth Retardation (IUGR)	Inadequate growth of the fetus so that it is smaller than expected for gestational age.	Family Doctor: Intrauterine Growth Restriction: When Your Baby Stops Growing Before Birth
Intravenous (IV)	A small tube inserted into a vein in the hand, foot, arm, leg, or scalp. An IV delivers medicine, fluids into the blood.	MedicineNet: Definition of Intravenous (IV) High-Risk Newborn IV Lines

Intraventricular Hemorrhage (IVH)

Also known as a brain bleed is a condition in which immature and fragile blood vessels within the brain burst and bleed into the hollow chambers (ventricles) normally reserved for cerebrospinal fluid and into the tissue surrounding them. An IVH is assigned a grade to give an estimate of how serious it is.

[Hershey Medical Center Intraventricular Hemorrhage of the newborn](#)

[Meriter Intraventricular Hemorrhage](#)

Interval Delivery

The delivery of subsequent babies can be delayed after the preterm delivery of the first.

[The Royal Women's Hospital Interval Delivery in a Multiple Pregnancy](#)

[MOST FAQ on Interval Deliveries](#)

Intubation

The procedure of inserting a tube through the mouth or nose, down the throat, and into the trachea or windpipe of a patient who may have difficulty breathing, or may be at risk of stopping breathing because of illness, surgery, or other medical problem.

IUGR

(see Intrauterine Growth Retardation)

IV

(see Intravenous)

IVH

(see Intra ventricular Hemorrhage)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Jaundice	Also known as hyperbilirubinemia, is a yellow discoloration of skin and whites of the eyes that results from excess bilirubin in the body's system. May require use of special lights (phototherapy) until the baby is more mature.	American Academy of Pediatrics: Jaundice and Your Newborn



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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Kangaroo Care (Skin to Skin Care)	Holding a baby against one's naked chest, so there is skin-to-skin contact.	Prematurity.org: Kangaroo Care Benefits MOST Skin-to-Skin Care FAQ

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Lactation Consultant	A health professional, sometimes but not always a nurse, who provides information and support about breastfeeding and pumping breast milk.	Pediatrics Find a Lactation Consultant PreemieCare Breastfeeding Resources
Late Preterm	A late preterm (near-term) infant is a baby born 3 to 6 weeks early, or between 34 and 36 completed weeks of gestation (almost 37 weeks).	UptoDate for Patients Late Preterm Infants
Lanugo	Fine, downy hair that covers the fetus until shortly before or after birth.	Dr. Greene: Lanugo
<u>LBW</u>	(see Low Birth Weight)	
Lead Wires	The wires that go from a monitor to its electrodes.	
Lesion	Any patch of abnormal skin, or any small part of an injury or infection that is abnormal and causes an illness.	MedicineNet: Definition of Lesion
Licensed Practical Nurse/ Licensed Vocational Nurse (LPN/LVN)	Health care professional with a vocational education lasting approximately 12 months and licensed to give nursing care under the direct supervision of a registered nurse or physician. In some states, called a licensed vocational nurse.	US Department of Labor: Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
Ligation	The act of binding or of applying a tie, wire, or bandage around a limb, blood vessel or similar to restrict blood flow. Used to treat PDA among other uses.	University of Maryland Medical Center: Congenital Heart Defect Corrective Surgery

Liquid Ventilation A form of respiration in which someone breathes an oxygen rich liquid, rather than breathing air. [Department of Neonatal Intensive Care Liverpool Hospital: Liquid Ventilation](#)

Low Birth Weight (LBW) Low birth weight infants are born weighing less than 2,500 grams or 5lbs 8oz at birth. [eMedicine Low Birth Weight](#)

LP (see **Lumbar Puncture**)

LPN (see **Licensed Practical Nurse**)

Lumbar Puncture (LP) Also called a Spinal Tap or "LP", is a diagnostic procedure that is done to collect a sample of spinal fluid for analysis, or on rare occasions to relieve increased pressure in the spinal fluid. [Children's Hospital Boston: Spinal Tap or Lumbar Puncture](#)

LVN (see **Licensed Vocational Nurse**)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>MAS</u>	(see Meconium Aspiration Syndrome)	
Meconium	Fecal material made by the fetus; usually passed in the first bowel movement after birth, but sometimes may be passed before birth and inhaled in the amniotic fluid during the fetus's normal breathing movement.	About.com: Meconium
Meconium Aspiration Syndrome (MAS)	Problems caused by meconium (baby's first bowel movement) going into the lungs. This can be serious but usually is not.	Medline Plus Meconium Aspiration
Medicaid	A program partially sponsored by the federal government and administered by states that is intended to provide health care and health-related services to both low-income individuals and to other qualifying persons. A child may qualify regardless of parental income, based on other circumstances, even if the child has other health insurance.	US Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services PremieCare Financial and Insurance Related Resources

Meningitis	An inflammation of the lining of the brain, from infection or other causes.	Merck: Meningitis
Microcephaly	A condition in which the circumference of the head is small because of abnormal brain growth. This condition may or may not result in future learning problems.	National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Microcephaly Information Page Microcephaly Support Group
Micropreemie	An infant who is born at less than 27 weeks gestation and weighs less than 800 grams or 1lb 12oz.	PubMed: Improved survival and short-term outcome of inborn "micropremies".
Milestones	Skills most children can perform at certain ages. Examples include: smiling, rolling, sitting, scooting, crawling, standing, walking, and talking.	University of Michigan: What is Child Development? The Whole Child: The ABC's Of Child Development MOST Developmental Milestones
Moderately Premature	Moderate Prematurity-Babies born from the start of 32 to the end of 33 weeks gestation.	Answers.com Preterm Birth
Monitor	A machine that records information such as heartbeat, body temperature, respiration rate, and blood pressure.	Neonatology Equipment
Moro Reflex	A normal reflex of young infants; a sudden loud noise causes the child to stretch out the arms and flex (scrunch up) the legs.	About.com Moro Reflex Keep Kids Healthy: Newborn Reflexes
Myopia	The inability to see distant objects as clearly as near objects.	Health of Children Myopia

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Nasal Cannula	The "oxygen tubes" that give extra oxygen by blowing moisturized oxygen, possibly mixed with air, into the nose.	Answer.com: Nasal Cannula

Naso-Gastric Tube (NG tube)	A tube that is passed through the nose and down through the throat and esophagus and into the stomach.	Medline Plus: Feeding Tube Infants Pediatrix Medical Group: Feeding Tubes
<u>Near Term Preemie</u>	(see Late Preterm)	
Nebulizer Treatment	A device for giving medicine by making a fine mist that is inhaled through the nose and/or mouth.	Pediatrics: Nebulizer Treatment
<u>NEC</u>	(see Necrotizing Enter colitis)	
Necrotizing Enter colitis (NEC)	An infection that destroys part of the baby's intestines. Drugs and/or surgery may be required.	Children's Memorial: NEC
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)	There are three levels of NICUs: <u>Level 3:</u> Cares for any infant (at any age of gestation) that may have or could have severe or life threatening conditions. <u>Level 2:</u> Any newborn that may require monitoring after birth and requires more than routine newborn care. <u>Level 1:</u> Routine newborn care. Usually for full term infants, there may not be specialized equipment or physicians for problems.	Kids Health: When Your Baby is in the NICU? WebMD: Getting to Know the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Healthy Children: NICU Medical Team
Neonatologist	Physician with 10 years of training specialized in dealing with the diseases and care of newborn infants.	Healthy Children: What is a Neonatologist?
Neurologist	Physician with 7 years of training specialized in dealing with the diseases and care of the brains and nerves.	Healthy Children: What is a Child Neurologist?
<u>NG Tube</u>	(see Naso-Gastric Tube)	
<u>NICU</u>	(see Neonatal Intensive Care Unit)	
Noninvasive	Meaning the body does not have to be entered through the skin or an opening (mouth, nose, anus, etc). Nothing is entered in the body.	Medline Plus: Noninvasive
<u>NP</u>	(see Nurse Practitioner)	

Nurse Practitioner (NP)

A health professional with 6-8 years of training, licensed to diagnose and treat illness in collaboration with physicians. They can prescribe medicine, order lab and radiology tests, and interpret the results. Neonatal nurse practitioners are one NP specialty and usually work in the NICU.

[American College of Nurse Practitioners: What is a Nurse Practitioner?](#)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>OAE</u>	(see Otoacoustic Emission Test)	
Occupational Therapist (OT)	A health professional with four to six years of training that helps people who are ill or disabled learn to manage their daily activities (their "occupations"). In the NICU, OTs may be involved in giving the premature baby stimulation, helping the infant learn to swallow, helping the infant stay comfortable and relaxed, and teaching the parents and other activities.	Duke Children's: Occupational Therapists
Ophthalmologist	Physician (MD) specializing in diagnosis and treatment of refractive, medical and surgical problems related to eye diseases and disorders.	Medicine.net: Pediatric Ophthalmologist
Oro-Gastric Tube	A flexible tube inserted through the mouth, down the throat and esophagus, and into the stomach.	American Pregnancy Association: Care for the Premature Baby
Oscillator	Also known as a HFV or High Frequency Ventilation, is a technique of ventilation that uses respiratory rates greater than normal breathing.	Pediatrix: High-Frequency Ventilator (HFV)
<u>OT</u>	(see Occupational Therapist)	
Otoacoustic Emission Test (OAE)	A passive audiological test that verifies cochlear activity often used to test infants suspected of hearing loss.	Medicine.net: Newborn Infant Hearing Screening Infant Hearing: OAE Test
Oximeter	Also known as a Pulse Oximeter, is a device worn on the finger, toe or earlobe that can measure levels of oxygen in the blood painlessly.	Neonatology on the Web: Equipment in the NICU



Oxygen Therapy

Giving extra oxygen to the tissues of the body through the lungs. The oxygen can be given in a number of ways, including through a ventilator, mask, nasal cannula, or blow-by. The amount of oxygen given may be measured as a percentage, and in number of liters of flow per minute.

Answers.com: Oxygen Therapy

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>Parenteral Nutrition</u>	(see Total Parenteral Nutrition)	
Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA)	Heart condition caused by the failure of the Ductus Arteriosus to close. Usually this normal opening between the aorta and the pulmonary artery closes just after birth. When it doesn't, the baby may be treated with medicine or surgery to fix the condition.	Cleveland Clinic: Patent Ductus Arteriosus
<u>PDA</u>	(see Patent Ductus Arteriosus)	
Pediatrician	Physician with seven years of training in the care and treatment of children.	About.com: Choosing a Doctor for Your Twins/Multiples MOST Choosing a Pediatrician
Percutaneous Line (PICC)	Also called percutaneously inserted central catheter or PICC line, this is a long catheter placed into a surface vein, with the catheter tip extending farther into the body into a large central vein. Doesn't have to be replaced as often as a regular IV line.	Medline Plus: Percutaneously inserted central catheter - infants
Periventricular Leukomalacia (PVL)	The ventricles or fluid spaces of the brain, "Leukomalacia" is softening of the white matter of the brain. Periventricular Leukomalacia is softening of the brain near the ventricles. The softening occurs because brain tissue in this area has died. May result in future problems with learning, vision, or movement.	National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Periventricular Leukomalacia Information Page



Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension of the Newborn (PPHN)

In PPHN, it is difficult for blood to get into the lungs and pick up more oxygen that can go to the rest of the body. The cause is usually unknown, and treatments are based on the individual situation. Persistent pulmonary hypertension (PPHN) is also known as persistent fetal circulation.

[UCSF Children's Hospital: Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension of the Newborn](#)

Phototherapy

Treatment for jaundice in a newborn infant. The infant is placed under (or on top of) special lights to help the body break down the extra bilirubin in the blood.

[WebMD: Phototherapy for jaundice \(hyperbilirubinemia\) in newborns](#)

Physical Therapist/Therapy (PT)

A health professional with four years or more of training who performs and teaches exercises and other physical activities to aid in rehabilitation and maximize physical ability with less pain. In the NICU, the PT may be involved in helping the baby's muscle and movement development.

[Bureau of Labor and Statistics: Physical Therapists](#)

[Southern Regional Health Systems: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Services](#)

Physician

A graduate of a medical school or school of osteopathy with an MD or DO degree.

PICC Line

(see Percutaneous Line)

PPHN

(see Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension of the Newborn)

Premature Infant

An infant born before the 37th week of pregnancy.

[Kids Health: A Primer on Premies](#)

Primary Carrier

The insurer who is primary is determined by rules established by coordination of benefits.

PT

(see Physical Therapist/Therapy)

Pulmonary Surfactant

(see Surfactant)

Pulse Oximeter

(see Oximeter)

PVL

(see Periventricular Leukomalacia)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Radiant Warmer	A heater that works by sending out radiant energy usually in the form of heat. They warm objects without needing to touch them. Radiant warmers are often used to heat infants in the neonatal intensive care units.	Neonatology.org: NICU Equipment
Radiologist	A physician with seven years of training who specializes in creating and interpreting pictures of areas inside the body.	SA Preemies: People in the NICU: Radiologist
<u>RDS</u>	(see Respiratory Distress Syndrome)	
<u>Reflux</u>	(see Gastro-Esophageal Reflux)	
Registered Nurse (RN)	Health professional with two or four years of training licensed to treat patient responses to illness and carrying out medication regimens prescribed by a physician, nurse practitioner, dentist or physician's assistant; usually has an associate's or bachelor's degree and may have additional degrees or certificates when working in the NICU.	Bureau of Labor and Statistics: Registered Nurse
Resident	A physician with four years of training in medical or osteopathy school who is in the process of completing the additional three years of training in a primary specialty (for example, pediatrics, ophthalmology, radiology, obstetrics/gynecology) following medical school.	Brigham and Women's Hospital: Who is Caring for my Baby?
Respirator	Also known as a ventilator, is a machine that helps breathing by supplying and regulating a flow of air and oxygen that goes through a tube threaded through the nose or mouth, down the back of the throat, and into the trachea (windpipe.)	UPMC: Ventilator Booklet

Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS)	Also known as Hyaline Membrane Disease, is a condition in which a premature infant with immature lungs does not develop surfactant, a protective film that helps air sacs in the lungs to stay open.	Healthtouch Online: Respiratory Distress Syndrome in Newborns
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)	A virus that causes mild respiratory infections, colds, and coughs in adults, but can produce severe respiratory problems, including bronchitis and pneumonia in young children.	PreemieCare: RSV FAQs
Respiratory Therapists (RT)	A health professional with 3-5 years of training who assesses breathing and heart function, treats with oxygen therapy or ventilation, and gives medicines to help with breathing as prescribed by a physician or practitioner.	US Department of Labor: Respiratory Therapists
Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)	A condition in which the blood vessels in the baby's eyes do not develop normally.	UMICH: Retinopathy of Prematurity National Eye Institute ROP Video
<u>RN</u>	(see Registered Nurse)	
<u>ROP</u>	(see Retinopathy of Prematurity)	
<u>RSV</u>	(see Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	
<u>RT</u>	(See Respiratory Therapist)	

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Sepsis	Infection, usually referring to a blood infection.	Aurora Healthcare: Neonatal Sepsis
Severe Prematurity	Also known as very premature, refers to babies born from 28 weeks through 31 weeks gestation	Answers.com: Premature Birth
<u>SGA</u>	(see Small for Gestational Age)	
<u>Skin-to-Skin Care</u>	(See Kangaroo Care)	
Small for Gestational Age	Smaller than the average baby born at that number of weeks gestation.	LPCH: Small for Gestational Age

(SGA)

Social worker	A professional with 4-6 years of training helping families cope with crises and change. In the NICU setting, the social worker helps families access community resources such as support groups and assistance programs. They help with planning the baby's hospital discharge and help families cope with stress.	Bureau of Labor and Statistics: Social Workers
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Sonogram (see **Ultrasound**)

Spinal Tap (see **Lumbar Puncture**)

SSI (see **Supplemental Security Income**)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	A Federal income program funded by general tax revenues. Children who qualify based on medical and financial criteria receive monthly payments.	Social Security Online: Supplemental Security Income Social Security Insider: Premature Infants and SSI PremieCare Financial and Insurance Related Resources
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Supraventricular Tachycardia (SVT) The most common abnormal tachycardia (fast heart rate) in children. [American Heart Association: Tachycardia](#)

Surfactant Also known as Pulmonary Surfactant, is a protective film that helps air sacs in the lungs to stay open. [About Kids Health: Surfactant Replacement Therapy](#)

SVT (see **Supraventricular Tachycardia**)

Swaddling Wrapping infants snugly in cloths, blankets or similar cloth so that movement of the limbs is tightly restricted.

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
Tachycardia	Fast heart rate.	eMedicine: Tachycardia
Tachypnea	Rapid breathing.	Medterms: Tachypnea Kids Health: Transient



[Tachypnea of the Newborn \(TTN\)](#)

TANF (see **Temporary Aid for Needy Families**)

Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) A government subsidized program that provides financial assistance to needy families. [US Department of Health and Human Services: Welcome to the](#)
[PreemieCare Financial and Insurance Related Resources](#)

Tonic Neck Reflex One of the reflexes present at birth also called the fencing reflex. An infant will crook one arm behind the head while the other is extended away from the body. [Dr. Hull: Reflexes, primitive](#)

Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) Also known as Parenteral Nutrition, is a technique in which nutrients are given to a person through an intravenous infusion. [Children's Hospital: TPN](#)

TPN (see **Total Parenteral Nutrition**)

Transfusion A treatment in which whole blood or blood products are given intravenously. [Kid's Health: Preemies and Transfusions](#)
[WebMD: Blood Transfusion](#)

Transient Tachypnea of the Newborn (TTN) Rapid breathing of newborn noted shortly after birth caused by too much fluid in the lungs. [Merck: TTN](#)

TTN (see **Transient Tachypnea of the Newborn**)

TTTS (see **Twin-Twin Transfusion Syndrome**)

Twin-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) A disease of the placenta (or afterbirth) that affects identical twin pregnancies. The shared placenta contains abnormal blood vessels which connect the umbilical cords and circulations of the twins. [About.com: Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome](#)

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>UAC</u>	(see Umbilical Arterial Catheter)	
Ultrasound	Also known as a sonogram, refers to the use of ultrasonic waves for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, specifically to image an internal body structure.	Radiology Info: Ultrasound
Umbilical Arterial Catheter (UAC)	A line placed directly into the umbilical artery through the baby's umbilical cord.	Newborn Services Clinical Guidelines: Umbilical Catheters
Umbilical Venous Catheter (UVC)	A line placed directly into the umbilical vein (a much larger vein than a peripheral vein) through the baby's umbilical cord.	Health Touch Online: Umbilical Venous Catheters In Newborns
<u>UVC</u>	(see Umbilical Venous Catheter)	
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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>Ventilator</u>	(see Respirator)	
Ventricle	In NICU terminology-a small chamber in the center of the brain or heart.	About.com Biology: Heart Ventricles Medterms: Brain Ventricles
Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW)	Very low birth weight infants weight less than 1500 grams or 3lbs 5 oz.	American Family Physician: Care of Premature Infants
<u>Very Premature</u>	(see Severe Prematurity)	
<u>Very, Very Premature</u>	(see Extreme Prematurity)	
Viable	Viable means an infant is able to survive.	
Visiting Nurse	A visiting nurse is a nurse who is paid to visit the sick in their homes.	Visiting Nurse Association
Vital Signs	Temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure and pain level.	eMedicine: Pediatric Vital Signs
<u>VLBW</u>	(see Very Low Birth Weight)	

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Term	Definition	Links to Information
<u>WIC</u>	(see Women's Infants, and Children program)	PremieCare Financial and Insurance Related Resources
Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC)	WIC is a nutrition program that helps pregnant women, new mothers, and young children eat well and stay healthy.	National WIC Association USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs WIC Sharing Center PremieCare Financial and Insurance Related Resources

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