

# THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

## *at WESLEY Medical Center*

The NICU is a special nursery for newborn babies who are born too early or have other medical problems. Your baby will be observed and monitored continuously in the NICU. The equipment in the NICU will help your baby until he or she can function better on his or her own. Heat, oxygen, and nourishment will be supplied as needed.

### *THE NICU TEAM*

#### **Neonatologist-**

Leader of the NICU team; a pediatrician with special training and skills in the care of premature and sick newborns

#### **NICU Nurse-**

A registered nurse who has special education and preparation to care for premature and sick newborns

#### **Respiratory Therapist-**

A health care professional who works with physicians and nurses in using equipment and providing care that helps your baby breathe

#### **Social Worker-**

A health care professional who is trained to counsel and support families with NICU babies, and who assist them with health care arrangements and financial matters

#### **Other Professionals-**

Speech therapist and other physicians, such as ophthalmologist

# ***BABY IN THE NICU***

All babies receive a physical exam on admission and daily. They are weighed every day. Most receive x-rays and lab work often.

**Monitors-** There are several wires taped with patches to your baby to monitor temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and oxygen content of the blood. An IV line to deliver fluids will often be in the belly button, arm, leg, or scalp of the baby.

**Environment-** Babies are often under a warmer of in an Isolette to help regulate their body temperature.

**Oxygen-** There may be a tube in the baby's mouth of an oxygen hood over his or her head to assist with breathing.

**Nourishment-** When the baby's digestive system can handle nourishment; he or she may be fed by a small tube in the mouth that goes into the stomach. Until then, nourishment is provided through IV fluids. As the bay gets strong enough to suck, swallow, and breath , he or she will be begin bottle and/or breastfeeding.

**Stress Signals-** Learn your baby's stress signals that indicate too much is happening and that he or she needs a break:

- Looking Away
- Fussing, Crying
- Hiccapping
- Arching back
- Stiffening Arms and Legs
- Holding Up a Hand with Flat Palm (Stop Sign)

**Going Home-** Before going home, be prepared to spend a few days and nights in a special room near the NICU with your baby. The nurses will be nearby to assist you and help you prepare for discharge. Don't forget to bring a car seat and clothes for the ride home. Enjoy your new addition!