



Bryan Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

## Your Baby at 23-25 Weeks' Gestation



Babies who are born early often have medical and developmental needs that are different from healthy full-term infants. This information sheet will help you understand medical and developmental needs based on your baby's current gestational age.

As your baby grows and develops, you will receive additional inserts. No matter what gestational age your baby is, there are things that you can do as a parent to offer comfort to your baby and participate in his or her care. Listed below are important ways that you can help your baby based on his or her current gestational age.

### Medical

- Baby's skin is very thin and fragile
- Eyelids are tightly or loosely fused
- The iris of the eye lacks pigment, which can make it difficult to tell eye color
- Baby has difficulty staying warm
- Baby's stomach is underdeveloped, so only gradual small amounts of breast milk or formula are offered
- Baby begins to develop surfactant (a substance that helps to keep the air sacs in our lungs from collapsing) around 24 weeks
- Baby's reproductive organs are all in place
- Baby's hands are developed with tiny fingernails
- Hair is growing on baby's head

### Developmental

- Baby can feel touch
- Taste buds have begun to form on baby's tongue
- Baby's eye movements are uncoordinated
- Baby has difficulty focusing
- Baby's inner ear is almost fully developed
- Baby is very sensitive to sound and does not tolerate noise well
- Baby's muscles appear very limp because he or she lacks muscle tone
- Baby has little control over movement
- Baby's sleep is disorganized
- Baby is unable to suck or displays a very weak attempt to suck
- Baby eats through a tube (called gavage feeding)
- First signs of teeth appear in the form of tooth buds beneath the gum

### What You Can Do for Your Baby

- Protect your baby's eyes from light
- Cover your baby's isolette
- Use nesting/boundaries when your baby is in the isolette
- Allow your baby to sleep for long periods of time
- Use cupping to provide appropriate tactile stimulation (i.e., touch your baby with cupped, not flat, hands)
- Let your baby have as much uninterrupted sleep as possible
- Practice skin-to-skin contact (called "kangaroo care") with your baby when stable
- Learn ways to sooth and calm your baby
- Learn your baby's timeout cues (i.e., signs of irritability or stress such as change in vital signs)
- Learn ways to touch your baby to limit stress
- Pump and store breast milk

*This information is provided for educational and informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice, treatment or consultation with qualified physicians and other healthcare professionals regarding your individual needs. The March of Dimes is not engaged in rendering medical advice or recommendations. "Your Baby at 23-25 Weeks' Gestation" was developed by the S.C. Chapter of the March of Dimes in partnership with Children's Hospital of Greenville Health System.*