

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance



Parent Handbook

Special Care Nursery (SCN)

Stratford General Hospital – East Building, Level 2



Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA)

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46 General Hospital Dr., Stratford, Ontario N5A 2Y6
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About the Special Care Nursery (SCN)

Babies are admitted to the Special Care Nursery (SCN) because they need specialized medical and nursing care. Our SCN is a **Level II Nursery**, which means we can provide specialized care for sick infants but do not have the ability to provide all the care of a Level III Nursery.

Our first priority is the care and health of your family. We want to work with you to meet your baby's needs and make sure your baby's stay is as positive as possible. Please ask questions or discuss concerns with your baby's nurse or doctor. If you are feeling overwhelmed, the Maternal Child staff are always available to support you and your family.

Additional supports are available, including:

- Social Worker
 - Public Health Nurse
 - Your midwife
 - Your spiritual advisor
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If Your Baby Was Transferred from Another Hospital

If your baby has come to us from a Level III Nursery, you may notice that some of our care is different. For example, your baby may be placed in an isolette with a cardiac monitor even if they were previously in a cot without monitors. This is **not a step backward**, but a way for our doctors to better understand what is normal for your baby.

Isolation

If your baby is admitted from home or transferred from another hospital, they will be placed in isolation for approximately 24–48 hours while screening tests are completed.

If your baby has been transferred from a unit where an outbreak has been declared, a longer period of isolation may be required, and additional diagnostic testing may be necessary.

Transfer of Accountability & Family Involvement

Whenever your baby's care changes to a new nurse, a report called **Transfer of Accountability** is given. This usually takes place at your baby's bedside or at the Communication Station.

What to know:

- You are welcome to participate in this report. If you prefer not to, please let us know.
- This is a good time to discuss any questions or concerns.
- At the start of each shift, your nurse will confirm your baby's identity by checking the identification band. We will do our best not to wake your baby during this important safety check.

Contact Information

You are welcome to call the SCN **anytime, day or night** with questions or concerns.

- Phone: 519-272-8210 ext. 2490
- Toll-Free: 1-888-275-1102 ext. 2490

If you leave the SCN, please provide a contact phone number.

The information in this handbook is for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice from your doctor.

Visiting the SCN

- Parents are welcome **24 hours a day**.
- **Children 17 years and under are not permitted to visit**, with the exception of a twin who has been discharged but has not yet left the hospital.
- You may be asked to temporarily leave during certain procedures.
- Please knock before entering when the door is closed.
- Respect the privacy of other families.

Balloons

- **Foil balloons only** on the Maternal Child Unit.
 - **No latex balloons.**
 - **No balloons permitted in the SCN.**
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Courtesy Bed / Room

Courtesy rooms are available for parents wishing to stay overnight.

What to know:

- No cost to parents
- Rooms are usually across from the SCN
- May be shared with another parent
- Refrigerator, shared bathroom with shower, breast pump access, and phone provided

Please bring:

- Personal toiletries
- Sanitary napkins
- Pillows and blankets
- Food and clothing

Electronic Devices

- Please keep cell phones on **silent mode**.
- Use headphones for music, games, or videos.
- Be mindful when taking photos—do not include other families or patients.

After-Hours Entrance

The main hospital entrance is locked from **8:00 pm to 6:00 am**. Press the wall button for assistance from Switchboard.

Parking

- Monthly parking card: **\$40/month + \$20 deposit**
- Deposit is refunded when the card is returned.

Food and Shops

- **West Side Café:** Mon–Fri, 7:30 a.m.–1 p.m. (West Building – Basement)
- **Coffee Shop:** Mon–Fri, 8:30 a.m.–7 p.m.; Weekends, 8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (Main Lobby)
- **Vending Machines:** 24-hour access (Emergency Department & Second Floor Lobby)
- **Gift Shop:** Mon–Fri, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. (Main Lobby)

Scents & Flowers

- Please use **scent-free products**.
- Avoid perfumes, colognes, and strongly scented flowers.

Shift Change

During shift change (**7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.**), you may be asked to step out while other babies are discussed.

Visitor Lists

Parents may provide a list of **up to four (4)** approved visitors who may see or care for the baby when parents are not present.

Preventing Infections

To protect your baby:

- Use hand sanitizer when entering and leaving the SCN
- Visitors must wear gowns when holding your baby
- Visit your baby first if you are visiting others in the hospital

Please postpone visits if you or your visitors are unwell, including symptoms such as fever, cough, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, cold sores, flu-like symptoms, or contagious illnesses.

Caring for Your Baby in the SCN

We encourage parents to be actively involved in their baby's care. As your comfort grows, you may begin providing more hands-on care such as bathing and taking temperatures.

Skin-to-Skin (Kangaroo Care)

Skin-to-skin care benefits both babies and parents.

Benefits for your baby:

- Improved feeding
- Less crying
- Better temperature regulation
- Improved heart rate and blood sugar

Benefits for you:

- Improved breastfeeding
- Increased milk supply
- Stronger bonding
- Increased confidence and relaxation



Feeding & Weight

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for babies. Families are supported in making informed feeding choices, including breastfeeding, bottle feeding, or combination feeding.

Support includes:

- Breast pump access and supplies
- Education on hand expression
- Safe storage of expressed breast milk

Babies are weighed **every night**.

5-in-1 Newborn Bundle (Ontario)

This online service allows you to:

- Register your child's birth
- Apply for a birth certificate
- Obtain a Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Apply for Canada Child Benefit and Ontario child benefits
- Receive RESP information



Please refer to the brochure for details.

Caregiver Leave (Ontario)

Parents may be eligible for job-protected, unpaid caregiver leave under Ontario legislation. Some families may qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) caregiving benefits.

For more information:

- Visit **ontario.ca** (Employment Standards Act – Leaves of Absence)
- Speak with your employer or HR department
- Ask your healthcare team or social worker

Ask Questions

It is okay – and encouraged – to ask questions. Use your baby's whiteboard to write reminders.

Examples:

- How is my baby doing?
- Can I hold my baby?
- What should I learn before going home?

Don't Forget to Capture the Moments

- Keep a journal or take photos
- Use the whiteboard to plan the day
- Decorate your baby's space
- Celebrate milestones
- Take a photo at the SCN mural at discharge

Preparing for Discharge Home

Discharge planning begins early. Your nurse will review your baby's discharge plan and help you prepare for going home.



Your Healthcare Team

Your baby's care is provided by a team of healthcare professionals. Depending on your baby's needs, this team may include:

Parents and Family

- You are **not visitors**, but vital members of your baby's care team.
- Parents are welcome in the SCN **24 hours a day**.
- We will support you in learning about your baby's care so you feel confident and prepared for discharge.
- You are the most important person in your baby's life.

Manager

- Responsible for the overall clinical, operational, and administrative management of the SCN.
- **Audra Boersen, Manager**
Phone: 519-272-8210 ext. 2272
Email: audra.boersen@hpha.ca

Pediatrician

- Manages your baby's care and leads the medical team.

Team Lead / Charge Nurse

- An experienced nurse overseeing daily unit activities.
- Works with staff and physicians to ensure quality care.

Registered Nurses (RN)

- Nurses with specialized training in intensive infant care.
- Coordinate and provide your baby's daily care.

Pharmacist

- Provides expertise on medications and intravenous therapies.

Respiratory Therapist

- Supports breathing assessment, management, and treatment.

Physiotherapist (PT)

- Assesses development and recommends positioning, handling, and feeding strategies.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

- Supports development through activities, handling, and feeding guidance.

Social Worker

- Supports families coping with stress, grief, communication challenges, and resource needs.

Lactation Consultant

- A trained healthcare professional who specializes in educating, supporting, and advising parents on breastfeeding and human milk feeding.

Registered Dietitian

- Plans optimal nutrition in collaboration with the healthcare team.

Clinical Educator

- Trains and supports staff and new learners.

Laboratory Technician

- Collects, processes, and analyzes blood work.

Spiritual Care

- Supports spiritual or religious needs during your hospital stay.

Students

- Student doctors, nurses, and other learners may be involved under supervision.

Infection Control

- A nurse specializing in Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC).

Volunteers – Cuddle Program

Cuddling is a proven non-pharmacological therapy that may:

- Reduce withdrawal symptoms
- Shorten hospital stay
- Reduce stress and crying
- Improve sleep and comfort
- Decrease the need for medications

With parent consent, cuddle visits may be arranged when parents are unable to be present.

Patient & Family Experience Feedback

We value your feedback. Please complete the Patient & Family Experience Feedback survey which will be emailed to you after discharge or on our website at www.hpha.ca.

