

## Fall Issue

### Congratulations on the birth of your baby

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Let's celebrate the new life that has joined your family. Your baby is beautiful and has unique gifts.

But the wonderful time you imagined for so long has taken an unexpected turn. Perhaps your baby was born too soon, or perhaps your baby came when due, but with health problems. You may feel frightened and overwhelmed. Know that your feelings are normal and shared by many other parents in the NICU.

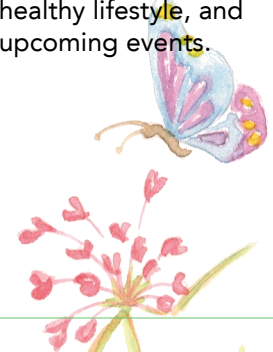
Also know that your presence is important and special to your baby. Your

baby will learn the sound of your voice and your unique touch. These gifts will encourage your baby to become stronger and move toward being healthier. You provide comfort to your baby in ways that no one else can. Your little one needs you and you have a valuable role in the NICU.

March of Dimes NICU Family Support® provides comfort and information to families, like yours, during your baby's NICU stay. Please join other

families in our activities and let us know how we can best help you.

This newsletter is intended to provide you with helpful information regarding the NICU, support services available to you and your family, tips about leading a healthy lifestyle, and upcoming events.



#### Did you know?

1 in 10 babies  
in the United States  
are born prematurely.

1 in 7 babies  
are born prematurely in  
South Carolina .



## Who's Who

### Your Baby's Doctors

Dr. Benton Cofer  
Dr. Reese Clark  
Dr. Shivani Desai  
Dr. Catrinel Marinescu  
Dr. Robert Newell  
Dr. Bryan Ohning  
Dr. Jeff Ruggieri  
Dr. Whit Walker  
Dr. David Wells

### Your Baby's Neonatal Nurse Practitioners:

Dawn Allen  
Deb Baldwin  
Karen Covington  
Debra Lynch  
Ara Messamer  
Treasure Snyder  
Kyle Weir  
Charlene Wells  
Catherine Wilson

### Your Nurse Supervisors:

Monica Kates  
Debbie Ingram  
Sharon Moore

### Your Nurse Managers:

Jennifer Griffin (NICU 1)  
Neta Greenlief (NICU 2)

### Your Social Workers

Gretchen Humerickhouse  
Debra Tate



## A NICU graduate's story



On May 20, 2010, I began an incredible journey with an emergency C-section heralding the birth of my twins, Evan and Anya. Evan and Anya arrived six weeks early and I was totally unprepared for their stay in the NICU.

Although I had been told, read, and heard that multiples often come early I never expected *my* babies to require hospitalization and only felt a vague understanding of what it really meant to have my babies in the NICU. After all, I had delivered two other children (now 12 and 6) at full term, had not experienced any complications with this pregnancy, and was a seasoned Marine wife who was used to dealing with all kinds of crises, unexpected events, transitions, and daunting challenges. Never

did I contemplate being separated from my babies or the roller coaster of emotions associated with having babies in the NICU.

Thankfully, Evan and Anya were born with good weights, 4 lbs., 1 oz. and 5 lbs., 14 oz., respectively. The Chief Neonatologist said this helped a lot. However, they both needed breathing assistance for about 12 hours and time to learn how to suck, swallow, and breathe. This came as a shock to me. How could they not know how to suck, swallow and breathe? Both of my other babies did. Weren't these skills automatic? Learning to appreciate and understand the magnitude of immature skills was eye opening, humbling, and often worrisome.

In the ten days that Anya remained in the NICU and the twelve days for Evan I grew to love, respect, and deeply admire the committed staff--

the nurses, doctors, occupational therapist and so many others whose hands, skills, and specialized training touched our babies and our hearts. When Anya's monitors beeped and my heart raced in response to the various numbers flashing, her nurse reassured me with a calm and thoroughness that stopped my panic in its tracks. When I called one night to check on the babies and was told that Anya had experienced an episode of apnea (not breathing for more than 20 seconds) and was fine but would not be released as

*Continued on page 4.....*

**If you have questions about pumping or breast-feeding, call Mary Beth Collins Lactation Consultant at 455-1694**

## The Nutrition Corner

Human Breast Milk has multiple benefits for infants and mothers. Some specific benefits for the premature infant include:

- Added protection from sepsis and other infections
- A decrease in chronic lung disease and ROP (retinopathy of prematurity)
- A decrease of incidence and severity of NEC

(necrotizing enterocolitis)

- A reduction in hospital length of stay
- Protection of the "Enteromammary System" - Skin: skin contact between mom and pre-term infant can induce the mother to make specific antibodies against the nosocomial pathogens in their infants environment and pass these through her milk

- Pre-term milk has increased nitrogen, total protein, immune proteins, total lipids, medium-chain fatty acids, total energy, some vitamins and minerals
- increased concentration of growth factors, hormones to aid in the development of gut and organs, live infection fighting cells.



**Upstate Mothers of**

# Resources in the Community

## Family Connection of South Carolina



Family Connection of South Carolina is a state –wide non profit organization aimed at strengthening families through parent support. No one quite understands like another parent that has been there. Family Connection offers a parent-to-parent match program based on the parent’s greatest need or concern. Trained parents of children with various medical needs are carefully matched with new families to help them anticipate what to expect, learn about community resources and find hope. Through Family Connection, parents work together to share their experiences, provide insight and offer support. Family Connection provides

many opportunities for families to get the information and support they need through informational workshops, support groups, newsletters, webinars, family social events an annual conference and advocacy efforts.

If you would like to talk to another parent who has had a baby in the NICU, let your social worker know or contact Family Connection at 800-578-8750 or [www.familyconnections.org](http://www.familyconnections.org)



## The Children’s Hospital Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics



The Department of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics is part of the Children’s Hospital and includes the Neuro-Developmental Program. The Neuro-Developmental Program is designed to monitor and support the development of newborn infants at risk for developmental delays. who have been in the NICU setting. Babies who are born weighing less than 1500 grams or less then 33 weeks gestation, or have a diagnosed medical condition, or other risk factors are eligible to be seen by this program. Families receive regular evaluations of their infant’s development and behavior to compliment care they are receiving from their pediatrician. Families also receive individualized information to help facilitate their infant’s development, along with information about community resources that can maximize developmental potential. Fro questions about the Neuro-Developmental Program please contact Developmental Pediatrics at (864) 331-1349.



*Continued from page 2.....*

soon as we had thought I was so relieved, relieved and thankful that she was in the care of true professionals who would not send my baby home sick or before she was ready. When Evan dropped to three pounds and I became tearful as I felt incompetent and unable to feed him, his angelic nurse gently reassured me and shared some of her amazing tips that I would later put into practice when he came home.

My husband, Christopher, and I were lucky and feel very blessed that our babies did not have a

longer stay in the NICU or other long term medical conditions. However, we will never forget the fear of seeing our babies hooked up to machines, wires seemingly going in every direction on their tiny bodies, feeding tubes, or the heart stopping sounds of monitors going off and lights flashing, indicating that one of our babies or someone else's was in trouble.

I am forever changed and touched by our NICU experience. Because of the commitment, passion, and expertise of others, today our 16 month old twins, Trial and Tribulation, I mean, Evan and Anya! are happy, healthy toddlers who are enjoying life to the fullest and who remind us daily of the miracles that grace our world.

Balbeer K. Bourne

## Keeping Your Baby Safe and Healthy

In South Carolina, you must take your baby home in an appropriate child safety seat. All babies that weigh less than 20 pounds must be placed in a rear-facing infant seat. Infant car seats must be less than 5 years of age and have working buckles and fasteners. In the NICU, all babies born under 37 weeks will receive a car seat test prior to going home. If your baby is very small, he may need an infant car bed. Your baby's nurse and respiratory

therapist will talk to you if this is something that needs to be considered.

For more information about car seat safety, visit Safe Kids Upstate at [www.safekidsupstate.org](http://www.safekidsupstate.org)



Evan and Anya  
16 months of age

### Smoking Cessation

Tuesdays 1:30-3  
(Heartlife at Greer)

Tuesdays 6:30-8  
(Life Center)

Call 455-1540 for more information

## Did you Know?

Babies who are born prematurely often have two different ages: their chronological age and their adjusted age (or corrected age). Chronological Age is the actual age of the baby or how old your baby is from their birthday. Adjusted Age is the age that the that your baby is, based on his or her due date.

To figure out what your baby's adjusted age is, subtract the number of weeks or months that your baby was born early, from their actual age. For example, if your baby was born at 28 weeks (3 months early) and their actual age is 6 months, their corrected age would only be 3 months.

Adjusted age is important to consider when thinking about your baby's development and growth. If your baby is born prematurely, there can be a significant difference between their actual age and adjusted age. Your baby's growth and development will change rapidly during the first few years of life. Expectations of growth and development will be more realistic if you consider your baby's adjusted age.

There are different opinions about how long you should adjust for prematurity. A good rule of thumb is to correct a year for each month your baby was born early (for example, adjust one year for one month; adjust 2 years for 2 months) Babies who are born earlier may need more time to close the gap between their adjusted and actual ages.

## More Resources in the Community

### Multiples

Upstate Mothers of Multiples is a volunteer organization made up of mothers of twins, triplets and higher number multiples. This group of mothers provides support and care to new parents of multiples through the exchange of ideas, sharing of knowledge, and sharing of equipment. The group meets a monthly basis, connects new members with a "buddy" and organizes consignment sales, regular play dates, mother night out events and quarterly parties. For more information about the Upstate Mothers of Multiples organization, visit [www.upstatemomclub.com](http://www.upstatemomclub.com)

Your voice is comforting and soothing to your baby. Ask your nurse to borrow a book from the NICU Bedside Reading Cart .





Rachel Balck and Hope Lienau  
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 NICU Family Support Specialists  
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 www.ghschildrens.org  
 NICU Direct (864) 455-7165

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We carry out this mission through research, community services, education and advocacy to save babies' lives.

NICU Family Support® is a comprehensive set of services, developed and launched to provide information and comfort to families during the NICU hospitalization of their newborn. NICU families receive information and materials about the NICU experience and have access to services and activities that provide support within the NICU setting.

Additional resources for NICU families can be found at [marchofdimes.com/nicu](http://marchofdimes.com/nicu). Also, visit [ShareYourStory.org](http://ShareYourStory.org), our online community for NICU families.

*Happy Neonatal*

*Nurse's Week*

*October*

*9th-15th*

## Family activities...please join us!

### Education Hours

- Feeding Your Baby**
- Connecting with Your Baby**
- Just for Dads**
- Just for Grandparents**
- To 10 Things You Need to Know**
- Close to Me**

### Creative Hours

- Scrapbooking**
- Healing Bracelets**
- Sibling Sunday**
- Sibling Game Night**

Check Monthly Calendars at both NICU Entrances for specific dates and times.  
 All Family Activities are held in NICU 2 Conference room and free of charge

As I love you through the glass the hours seem so slow to pass

I stroke your skin and hold your hands

this isn't exactly what I planned

I cast my eyes up to the sky and say a little prayer

That you will receive great loving care

So sleep and grow, my baby

and dream of clouds of foam

And I will love you through the glass until you can come home.

