

# NICU Glossary

Learning as much as you can about our Regional Level III Neonatal ICU can make it seem less scary and more reassuring.

Here is just some of what you may come across in your prematurity journey:

**Acidosis** is caused by the accumulation of waste acids in the body as a result of either breathing difficulties or poor functioning in metabolic systems.

**Anemia** is a condition where the number of red cells in the blood is lower than normal. Crit or **hematocrit** is the test used to measure the percentage of red blood cells in relation to the total volume of blood.

**Apnea** (also called apneic episodes or apneic spells) is an interruption in breathing that lasts 20 seconds or longer. Some preemies need manual stimulation or drug therapy to restart or maintain normal breathing patterns.

**Aspiration:** Breathing or inhaling fluid such as amniotic fluid, meconium or formula into the lungs.

**Adjusted age**, also known as corrected age, is a preemie's chronological age minus the number of weeks she was born early.

**Bili lights** and **Bili blankets** are used to treat jaundice, which is common in all newborns. This may also be called **phototherapy**.

**Blood gases** are the measure of levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in a baby's blood.

**Bradycardia** is a slowed heart rate. Brady episodes are usually temporary and often associated with apnea in preemies.

**Brainstem auditory evoked response test** is a hearing test for newborns.

**Bronchopulmonary dysplasia**, abbreviated BPD and sometimes called **Chronic Lung Disease**, is lung damage and scarring that can be caused by prolonged periods of mechanical ventilation.

**Cardiopulmonary monitors** (also called cardio-respiratory monitors) track a baby's heart and breathing rates. An **apnea monitor** detects interruptions in breathing.

**CAT/CT scans** (short for computed tomography scans) use a narrow band of radiation paired with computer imaging systems to produce precise pictures of tissues.

**Catheters** are small, thin plastic tubes that deliver fluid internally or are used to remove fluid from a baby's body.

**Broviac catheters** are designed to stay in place for weeks or months.

**Cerebral palsy** is a group of conditions caused by damage to one or more areas of the brain during fetal development, birth, or in infancy. It affects control of movement, posture, flexibility, and muscle strength.

**Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)** delivers oxygen through nasal cannula or endotracheal tubes to help a preemie breathe by keeping the air sacs of the lungs open.

**Endotracheal (ET) tube:** A clear plastic tube that is passed through the mouth between the vocal cords and then into the windpipe. Breaths from the ventilator are given and mucus can be removed through this tube

**IDF: Infant Driven Feeding program provides criteria to determine if and when your baby is ready to advance with bottle/breast feeding.**

**IVH: Intraventricular Hemorrhage, or bleeding in and around the brain.**

**Jaundice** is the yellowing of the skin and eyes caused by the accumulation of a normal waste product called bilirubin.

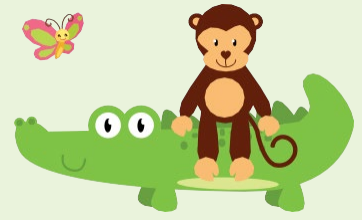
**Kangaroo care** is a way of holding a preemie with skin-to-skin contact that can be incredibly comforting to both parents and babies.

**MRI scans** (short for magnetic resonance imaging) use strong magnets paired with computer imaging systems to produce extremely detailed pictures of tissues.

**Nasal cannulas** are soft plastic tubes that go around a preemie's head and under her nose where nasal prongs deliver oxygen.

**Necrotizing Enterocolitis**, commonly abbreviated as **NEC**, is swelling, redness, and tenderness of the intestine caused by decreased blood supply or infection. Severity varies from case to case.

**Neonatologists** are pediatricians who have trained specifically to care for premature, sick and special needs newborns.



**Osteopenia of prematurity**, abbreviated **OOP**, is a decrease in the amount of calcium and phosphorus in a baby's bones that causes them to become brittle and weak.

**Patent ductus arteriosus** or **PDA** refers to the incomplete closure of the ductus arteriosus, a blood vessel connecting the pulmonary artery to the aorta. Usually this vessel closes soon after birth; when it remains open, it can be treated medically or surgically.

**Persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn**, abbreviated **PPHN**, refers to high blood pressure in the lungs that causes blood vessels in the lungs to narrow. This can lead to breathing problems.

**Pneumothorax** is a condition in which air from a preemie's lungs leaks out into the space between the chest cavity and the lungs themselves. Larger leaks may require surgical repair.

**Pulmonary interstitial emphysema** occurs in babies on ventilators when bubbles form around the alveoli of the lungs.

**Pulse oximeters** monitor a baby's blood oxygen level using a tiny infrared light attached to the foot or the hand.

**Retinopathy of prematurity** or **ROP** is scarring and abnormal growth of blood vessels in the retina. Because the retina does not mature until close to term, the growth of blood vessels can be altered by many factors related to prematurity.