



NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU) A SPECIAL PLACE FOR THE TINIEST FIGHTERS

The birth of a child is one of the happiest moments in life. But sometimes the happiness is a little marred when little ones arrive earlier than expected or with health challenges that need extra medical attention. **This is where the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) makes a difference - a specialised unit designed to care for premature and critically ill newborns.**

It will be wrong to regard the NICU as just a hospital ward. Rather it's a specialised space where advanced technology and compassionate professionals work round the clock to give fragile babies the best possible start in life. From ventilators that help tiny lungs breathe to incubators that provide a warm and protected environment, the sole focus in the NICU is to support a baby's growth and survival.

Need for NICU

There are varied reasons for a newborn to require NICU care. The most common is premature birth (before 37 weeks of pregnancy). Other causes include low birth weight, breathing difficulties, infections, congenital conditions or complications during delivery. Even full-term babies sometimes need NICU support if they face unexpected health issues.

Inside the NICU, a team of specialists - neonatologists, nurses, respiratory therapists and nutrition experts - constantly monitor and treat each baby. While beeping monitors and medical equipment abound inside the NICU they all have a single purpose - to keep a close watch on the delicate lives.



The role of parents

It is surprising, yet true, that parents, too, are an essential part of NICU care. Many units encourage kangaroo care which is skin-to-skin contact to help babies stabilise their breathing and heart rate while strengthening the bond with their parents. Nurses and doctors also guide families on how to participate in feeding, soothing and caring for their baby, making them active partners in the healing journey.

The time spent in the NICU can vary from a few days to several weeks, depending on the baby's condition. While the experience is often filled with ups and downs, advances in neonatal medicine have significantly improved outcomes. Today, specialised NICU care gives even babies born as early as 24 weeks a fighting chance.

NICU is indeed a place of resilience and hope. Here, not only do the tiniest fighters demonstrate incredible strength, families too discover just how powerful and magical love and medical care can be when combined.