

## Common Terms and Abbreviations Used in the NICU



Your baby is in a special part of the hospital. It's called the NICU. This stands for neonatal intensive care unit. Your baby is getting special care. Below are words that you will hear used in the NICU.

**BP (blood pressure).** This is a type of measurement. BP is the force of the blood on blood vessel walls. This is caused by the heart beating and by the muscles inside the blood vessel walls.

**mL (milliliter).** This is a metric unit of volume. Thirty mL equals about 1 fluid ounce.

**CNS (central nervous system).** This is the brain and spinal cord.

**CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure).** This is a way to give a steady, gentle supply of air into the airway while a baby is breathing on their own. This can be done with a ventilator (breathing machine).

**CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).** This is a way to get the heart and lungs working again if they have stopped.

**ET or ETT (endotracheal tube).** This is a breathing tube. It goes through the mouth or nose into the windpipe.

**Grams and kilograms.** These are metric units of weight. One hundred grams is about 3.5 ounces. One kilogram is about 2.2 pounds.

**HFV (high-frequency ventilator).** This is a breathing machine. It gives hundreds of small breaths per minute.

**IMV (intermittent mandatory ventilation).** This is a way to help babies breathe. A breathing machine gives a set number of breaths per minute.

**IV (intravenous).** This means given by vein.

**IV catheter.** This is a small, flexible, hollow plastic tube put into a vein over a needle. The needle comes out. The catheter stays in the vein.

**IV pump.** This is a machine used to give IV fluids.

**LP (lumbar puncture).** This is a type of test. A small needle is used to take fluid from around the spinal column.

**NG tube (nasogastric tube).** This is a feeding tube. It goes through the nose to the stomach.

**NICU (neonatal intensive care unit).** This is a special part of the hospital. It's for newborns who need extra care.

**NPO (nil per os).** This means no food or liquid given by mouth. (It is a shortening of a Latin term.)

**O<sub>2</sub> (oxygen).** This is a gas in the air we breathe. It is needed for life.

**OG tube (orogastric tube).** This is a feeding tube. It goes through the mouth into the stomach.

**PICC (peripherally inserted central catheter) or PCVC (percutaneous central venous catheter).** This is a type of tube. It is put into a large vein.

**Radiant warmer bed.** This is an open bed with a heating device.

**SIMV (synchronized intermittent mandatory ventilation).** This is IMV timed with the baby's breaths.

**TPR.** This stands for temperature, pulse, and respiration.

**TPN (total parenteral nutrition).** This is nutrition fed straight into the bloodstream.

**UAC (umbilical arterial catheter).** This is a tube put into an artery. It is put in at the stump of the umbilical cord.

**UVC (umbilical venous catheter).** This is a tube put into a vein. It is put in at the stump of the umbilical cord.

**VS (vital signs).** This refers to temperature, pulse, breathing, and blood pressure.

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions  
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.