



The NICU

understanding the levels of

What is a NICU?

A NICU, or neonatal intensive care unit, is a hospital unit that is specially dedicated to caring for newborn babies. The NICU usually cares for premature babies (those born before completing 37 weeks of pregnancy) and babies that are born with illnesses or difficulties. NICUs are outfitted with special staff and technology that make them especially good at caring for newborns.

Understanding NICU Levels

NICUs across Michigan are given different level ratings, which can tell you what kind of care they are able to provide for a newborn. These ratings are assigned by the Certificate of Need review standards and are based on the different types of staff and abilities that a NICU has. The higher the level, the more the NICU can do to help a baby.

• Specialty Care Nursery:

- Care for issues that should get better quickly.
- Care for infants born at or after 32 weeks of pregnancy and/or weigh 1,500 grams or more.
- Give a baby a feeding tube.
- Monitor a baby's heart and lungs to check on the baby's ability to breathe.
- Care for a newborn for an extended period of time as long as the baby does not need ventilatory support (help breathing).
- Provide mechanical ventilation or continuous positive airway pressure or both to help a baby breath. They cannot provide this care to a baby for more than 24 hours combined.
- All the abilities of a Level 1 facility.



• Level III:

- Provide long-term life support.
- Care for newborns born before 32 weeks of pregnancy who weigh less than 1,500 gm.
- Care for newborns of all weights and lengths of pregnancy who have a life-threatening illness.
- Provided full range of pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, pediatric anesthesiologists, pediatric ophthalmologists. These are doctors who have intensely studies how to help sick newborns.
- Provide many different types of breathing support (ventilation, high-frequency ventilation, inhaled nitric oxide)
- Perform advanced imaging. Advanced imaging is a way to use technology to see problems inside a newborn's body.
- All the abilities of a Specialty Care Nursery facility.

• Level IV:

- Are part of a hospital that can do complex surgery on issues in newborns.
- Maintain a full range of pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical subspecialists, and pediatric anesthesiologists at the site. This is different from Level 3, because in Level 3 the doctors do not have to be located at the site of the NICU.
- Help with the transport of newborns.
- Provide education on caring for newborns.
- All the abilities of a Level 3 facility.

Source: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/CON-204_CON_Rev_Stdс NICU_Svcс 12.22.14_477794_7.pdf