

# Psychosocial care Neonatology





## Dear parents

Your child is being cared for in the neonatology department because it was born prematurely or is ill and therefore requires intensive medical treatment. A premature birth, like the birth of a sick child, is a challenging situation for most families. They have to adapt to the new circumstances and find their way in the unfamiliar environment of the neonatal intensive care unit. You are probably very worried about your child's health.

We see parents and child as a unit during this initial period. They need each other in order to grow into their new roles and build a healthy relationship. It has been shown that professional support for parents can help to build a bond between the child and the parents. This in turn can promote the development of your child be promoted.

We would like to support you in emerging from what can be a difficult start as a resilient and capable parent. The Department for Neonatology in Bern therefore offers newborn babies and their families psychosocial support during their stay in hospital, which you are welcome to take advantage of. A team of specialists from the fields of psychology, music therapy, pastoral care, social counselling, breastfeeding counselling and peer parents is available for this purpose. This team works closely with the doctors and carers. The regular exchange of information between the specialists ensures the best possible care.

*Your neonatology care team*

# Psychological support

## How

If you would like an initial consultation, please contact the nursing staff, your responsible doctors, or get in touch with us directly. The therapy sessions will be billed through your child's/the children's basic insurance.

## What

The birth of a premature or sick child can be a joyful yet challenging life event for parents. We advise, accompany, and support you as parents during this important phase of bonding, throughout your child's hospitalization, and during the transition home

## *Possible topics:*

- Support in building the parent-child bond
- Processing a birth experienced as traumatic
- Processing a complicated pregnancy
- Developing strategies for coping with the challenging situation
- Support in postpartum crises or with depressive symptoms
- Counseling on dealing with the premature or sick child or siblings
- Support with couple conflicts, family difficulties, or other stressors

## Contact

Psychologists: +41 31 632 19 96

Secretariat: +41 31 632 94 86

# Pastoral Care

## How

You can inform the nursing staff that you would like our visit, or you can reach us by phone at any time through the central reception of the Inselspital.

## What

You are the parents of a premature or sick child and are accompanying your child during the hospital stay. This is a challenge for the entire family. During this difficult time, we, the Pastoral Care of Inselspital, are here for everyone who wishes our support. You determine the content of the conversation. We are bound by confidentiality. Our services are free of charge for you.

- We accompany you and your child in crisis situations around the clock.
- We support you in difficult situations in making a well-considered decision (ethical counseling).
- We gladly address your spiritual and religious concerns.
- We create personal rituals for you and with you, e.g., baptisms, blessings, and farewells.
- We help you find ways to gather strength so that you can be fully present for your child during times of exhaustion.
- We provide contacts to other denominations and religions if needed.

## Contact

Pastoral Care / Care Team Insel  
Gruppe: +41 31 632 17 40

or reachable 24/7 via the central  
reception: +41 31 632 21 11

# Social Counseling

## How

If you would like a conversation, please contact the nursing staff in your department or the secretariat of the social counseling service, which will connect you with the responsible social worker in your clinic. We provide counseling during inpatient and outpatient treatment and, if necessary, refer you to other specialized services. Our counseling is free of charge for you. We are bound by confidentiality and professional secrecy.

## What

Together with you, we will address your questions and concerns and seek appropriate solutions. We provide counseling in a collaborative manner, meaning your ideas and wishes are our priority.

*We are happy to advise and support you with your individual questions:*

- regarding personal, social insurance, and material concerns
- during the hospital stay or the upcoming discharge from the hospital

*Upon your request, we provide information on:*

- social issues related to childbirth and maternity/paternity
- social insurance and health insurance
- existing service offerings and institutions in the region

*We assist you in connecting with:*

- relief options during/after your child's hospital stay
- financial support and other forms of material assistance
- addresses of other specialized services (such as counseling centers, parent associations, social services, etc.)

## Contact:

Secretariat of Social Counseling  
+41 31 632 91 71  
sozialberatung@insel.ch

# Musiktherapie

## How

Premature and sick newborns often experience sensory overload or under-stimulation in the hospital. Music therapy addresses this imbalance by creating gentle, perception- and development-promoting auditory experiences, providing security in the unfamiliar environment. Each session is tailored to the child's needs and may include humming, gentle rhythms, or playing selected instruments. Music therapy takes place directly at your child's bedside, for example, during kangaroo care.

## What:

Music therapy is a practice-oriented scientific discipline that works closely with the neonatology treatment team, enabling tailored, family-centered support. It is available free of charge to all premature and sick newborns and their families in the neonatology department. Music therapy supports not only your child but also you as parents.

*For your child, music therapy means:*

- Protection from stress and sensory overload for the regulation of the nervous system
- Promotion of stability, inner security, and moments of comfort
- Harmonization of behavioral states and sleep-wake cycles
- Support for sensory and neural development
- Interaction in the absence of parents through familiar sounds

*For you as parents:*

- Support in the emotional processing of prematurity
- Moments of relaxation
- Strengthening of trust in intuitive parental competence
- Enhancement of the parent-child bond through conscious closeness and interaction
- Support in postpartum depression
- Inclusion of the family for strengthening rituals, including during the transition home

## Contact

Betty Legler,  
Music Therapist (MAS, SFMT)  
Present from: Monday to Wednesday



Further information:

# Breastfeeding Counseling

## How

For appointments, please contact the responsible nursing staff for your child or reach out to us directly by phone. We look forward to meeting you!

## What

The breastfeeding and lactation consultant is available to assist you with all questions regarding nutrition with breast milk, expressing milk, breastfeeding techniques, and more. We aim to competently and empathetically address your personal needs, concerns, and questions.

- Bonding/Kangaroo Care
- Initial breast contact
- Breastfeeding premature infants
- Breastfeeding sick children
- Breastfeeding multiples
- Questions about breastfeeding/pumping
- Pain during breastfeeding/pumping
- Different breastfeeding positions
- Insufficient or excessive breast milk
- Various breast pumps
- Milk stasis, breast infection
- Breastfeeding aids
- Maternal illness

- Questions about medications during breastfeeding/pumping
- Donating breast milk
- Discharge counseling
- Desire to wean

Your health insurance's basic coverage covers three breastfeeding consultations. During your child's hospitalization in the children's clinic, a maximum of two breastfeeding consultations will be billed. Any additional support from us will not be charged.

## Contact

Breastfeeding and Lactation  
Counseling

+41 31 632 14 60

Email: [stillberatung.neo@insel.ch](mailto:stillberatung.neo@insel.ch)





# Peer Support – Parents Supporting Parents

## How

If you feel the need to connect with parents who have had similar experiences with their children in the neonatology unit, this is possible at any time. Our peer parents are regularly available to you free of charge.

The peer parents from Frühchen & Neokinder Schweiz are happy to visit you at your child's bedside and assist you with any questions you may have. True to the motto, «Parents supporting parents».

[info@fruehchenschweiz.ch](mailto:info@fruehchenschweiz.ch)

## What

The benefit of peer support in the neonatology unit lies in the assistance affected parents receive from other parents who have gone through similar experiences.

## Emotional Support

Peer parents understand the challenges and fears of parents in the neonatology unit from their own experience and can offer empathy and comfort. The exchange on equal terms provides a sense of not being alone.

## Practical Help

Peer parents share tried-and-true strategies, tips, and personal experiences that can be helpful in dealing with the new life situation.

## Fostering Connections

Peer support can help parents establish contacts that remain after the neonatology period and serve as long-term support.

## When

The peer parents visit the neonatology unit every two weeks for two hours. The current dates can be found on the flyers on the walls. You can also sign up online at any time for an exchange with a suitable person through the Peer Tool:

[www.fruehchenschweiz.ch/peer-pool](http://www.fruehchenschweiz.ch/peer-pool).



## Contact

Frühchen & Neokinder Schweiz  
Lerchenweg 33, 3012 Bern  
031 515 65 25  
[info@fruehchenschweiz.ch](mailto:info@fruehchenschweiz.ch)





**Universitätsklinik für Kinderheilkunde**  
Department of neonatology care  
Inselspital, Universitätsspital Bern  
CH-3010 Bern

