When can my baby go home?

For the last few months, you have been coping with your baby’s prematurity, medical problems and hospitalization, so it may be difficult to imagine that your baby will ever be healthy enough to come home.

At Mount Sinai Hospital, your baby will be ready for discharge when s/he:

- is able to maintain his/her temperature;
- is not having any apnea and bradycardia (spells); and
- is feeding from your breast or bottle.

It is common for parents to experience anxiety about taking care of their baby at home, after s/he has been dependent on medical and nursing care for some time.

You May Feel:

- The excitement of your baby coming home is overshadowed by the fear/anxiety of looking after your baby.
- Unsure about your ability to provide for your baby as well or to recognize and manage any health problems that may occur.
- Worried that your baby may get ill and have to be re-admitted into hospital.
- Concerned about feeding. You may have experienced difficulties with breastfeeding or bottlefeeding as your baby may be a “slow” or “fussy” feeder, and this may contribute to a sense of frustration, worry, discouragement or even a feeling of failure.

Therefore it is important for you to participate in your baby’s care now in order to prepare for discharge!
Things I Need To Do Before Discharge

Get to know your baby by:

- Becoming involved with his/her care as soon as possible;
- Feeling comfortable giving a bath and changing diapers and clothing;
- Feeding your baby as often as you can, so you feel comfortable with how s/he feeds and burps;
- Learning ways to comfort or settle him/her;
- Understanding his/her cues for hunger, of being over stimulated or tired;
- Understanding signs and symptoms of illness;
- Feeling comfortable positioning and handling; and
- Learning about any specific care your baby may need at home.

For the last two to three weeks before discharge, please be at the hospital as much as possible to do most of the feeding and baby care.

Take a CPR Course (Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation)

Learn baby cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This is appropriate for all parents, not just parents of preemies. This course is offered to parents every 3 weeks at Mount Sinai Hospital. You are strongly encouraged to register for this.

Information is available in your parent group pamphlet, or speak to your baby's nurse. You can also register for community CPR courses. (See handout)

Preparation also includes:

Choosing a doctor:

- Your family doctor may be quite comfortable taking care of your baby and consulting with a paediatrician when necessary.
- S/he may suggest a paediatrician, if so ask him/her for a recommendation or ask friends who have had positive experiences.
- The nurses in the NICU/Level 2 also have a list of paediatricians in your area.
- You are encouraged to make an appointment to “interview” a few paediatricians before making a final decision.
- It is important to choose a doctor before your baby is discharged. Give the name to your baby's nurse as soon as possible.