



# Glossary – terms commonly used within the Neonatal Service

Whānau/Family Information – Neonatal Services

## **Absorb**

The body's ability to take in, or incorporate back into the body, fluids or food.

## **Anaesthetic**

Drugs used for bringing on the loss of sensation (and hence pain) in many medical and surgical procedures. General anaesthetic (GA) produces unconsciousness and is administered by a specially trained doctor called an Anaesthetist.

## **Antibiotics**

Drugs used to fight off bacterial infection, eg. Vancomycin, Gentamicin, and Amoxil.

## **Anaemia**

The reduction below normal levels of the number of red blood cells (haemoglobin).

## **Apgar**

A numerical scoring system given at 1, 5, and 10 minutes after birth to evaluate the condition of the pēpi/baby at delivery by checking the heart rate, respiratory rate, colour, irritability and muscle tone. Ten is the maximum.

## **Apnoea**

The temporary stopping of breathing by a pēpi.

## **Aspiration**

1. The breathing of material into the windpipe (trachea) or lung; or
2. Removal of material from the lungs (secretions) or stomach by suctioning.

## **Asphyxia**

Suffocation due to lack of oxygen and high carbon dioxide levels in the blood.

## **Bagging**

A colloquial word to describe the procedure of applying oxygen via a mask connected to an oxygen bag. The pēpi nose and mouth are covered by the mask and the bag gently squeezed to ventilating the lungs.

## **Bilirubin**

A breakdown product of red blood cells; excess amounts cause jaundice (a yellowing of the skin).

## **Blood gas**

A test performed on a sample of blood – arterial (from an artery) or a cap gas (from a capillary, ie. a heel prick) – to measure the amounts of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the bloodstream.

## **Blood count**

A test of a sample of blood to tell the numbers of red and white cells at a given time. Also known as Full Blood Count.

## **Blood pressure**

(*BP*) The pressure of force that the blood exerts against the walls of the arteries during circulation. It is described by numbers: systolic (the top or high number) and diastolic (the low or bottom number).

## **Blood top-up**

Blood transfusion given to supplement pēpi own blood.

## **Bonding**

Establishing a close relationship between a parent and a child.

## **Bradycardia**

An abnormally slow heart rate (beats per minute) ie. less than 100 for a preterm pēpi. A newborn's heart rate is usually 120 to 160.

## **Brainz monitor**

A machine to monitor the brain waves of a pēpi. Used when an injury is suspected.

## **Breast pump**

A device, either hand or electrically driven, to extract breastmilk.

**Bubble CPAP**

A breathing circuit that bubbles air or oxygen through water giving continuous positive airway pressure. See CPAP.

**Caffeine**

A medicine given to pēpi to stimulate their breathing.

**Catheter**

A tube to either put fluid into the pēpi body or to drain fluid out of it.

**Cerebral**

Applying to the structure and the functions of the brain.

**Chromosomes**

Each human body cell has 46 chromosomes; 23 pairs. They are the genetic blueprint containing all the information that makes each human unique.

**Chronic lung disease**

Chronic disease/damage to lungs that requires breathing support beyond 36 weeks gestational age.

**Colostrum**

The first breastmilk produced after the birth of a pēpi. It appears thick and yellowish in colour and is rich in protein and antibodies.

**CPAP**

*(Continuous Positive Airway Pressure)*  
A machine to help keep an infant's lung expanded while they do their own breathing.

**Corrected age**

Describes the age your pēpi would have been if they were born at term, eg. for a pēpi born at 30 weeks (10 weeks early), when your pēpi is 26 weeks old from birth, their corrected age is 16 weeks.

**Culture**

A biological term for a specially prepared substance to grow microbes (germs) on to identify which organism to treat for an illness.

**Dehydration**

Being low in fluids due to vomiting, diarrhoea, overheating and/or evaporation through the skin.

**Dextrose**

A sugar solution given to maintain or raise the level of sugar in the blood.

**Drip**

Commonly used name for an intravenous infusion (IV). A system where a measured sterile fluid is given via a small needle and tubing by an electric pump.

**EBM**

Expressed breastmilk.

**Echo**

(Echocardiograph) Use of ultrasound to examine the structure of the heart. The ultrasound waves are directed at the heart through the chest wall and seen on a screen.

**Electrolytes**

Refers to the minerals in the blood, eg. Sodium, Potassium, and Calcium.

**ET tube**

See Tube.

**Engorgement**

In the breast, when the breastmilk is coming in. Sometimes the breasts become enlarged and uncomfortable. Helped by frequent breast-feeding or expressing.

**Exchange transfusion**

Blood given as an exchange for severe jaundice (yellowing of the skin).

**Extended posture**

Position in which a pēpi lies with straight arms and legs.

**Extubate**

Removal of the breathing tube from the windpipe/trachea.

**Fontanelle**

Two soft areas on a pēpi head where the bony plates that make up the skull have not yet come together – a large area on the top, and a smaller one near the back of it. The areas close within 12 to 18 months.

**Formula**

Milk mixtures suitable for infant's consumption.

**Gestational age**

The time in weeks from the last menstrual period, indicating the length of the pregnancy. Full term is 40 weeks, but can range from 37-42 weeks.

**Genitalia**

Sex organs – penis or vagina.

**Glucose**

A natural sugar which is a main source of energy for the body.

**Head circumference**

Pēpi head size measured at the largest point.

**High frequency ventilation**

Special type of ventilation where the ventilator delivers frequent rapid breathes at above 180 breathes per minute.

**Heredity**

Characteristics transmitted from one generation to another through genes on the chromosomes.

**Haemoglobin**

(Hb) A protein present in the red blood cells that carries oxygen around the body to the tissues.

**Haemorrhage**

Bleeding either inside or outside the body.

**Heel-prick**

A small prick in the pēpi heel to do blood tests (usually for blood gases or blood sugar levels).

**Hernia**

A bulge of tissue where the bowel protrudes outside the abdomen. An inguinal hernia is in the groin. It is more frequent in premature boys, and is often repaired by surgery.

**Human milk fortifier**

A multi nutrient powder added to milk to give extra nutrient to pēpi.

**Respiratory Distress Syndrome**

(RDS) Sometimes referred to as hyaline membrane disease (HMD). A lung condition mostly occurring in pēpi/babies less than 32 weeks gestation due to a lack of surfactant that is present naturally in older pēpi/babies.

**Hypoglycaemia**

Low blood sugar.

**Incubator**

Specially enclosed bed with the ability to control temperature.

**Infection**

The presence in or on the body of harmful organisms (bugs).  
Bacterial infections can be treated with antibiotics; very few viruses are treatable.

**Intravenous**

Direct access into the vein by needle or plastic tube for giving fluids or drugs.

**Intubation**

The act of inserting the endotracheal tube; usually through the mouth, but also can be through the nose.

**Isolation**

An area set aside to keep anyone suspected of a contagious infection away from others. It is usual to nurse such pēpi/babies on their own and staff to wear gown and gloves.

**Jaundice**

The yellow colour of a pēpi/baby's skin caused by too much bilirubin in the layer below the skin. It is sometimes treated by phototherapy.

**Lactation**

The body's process of making breastmilk.

**Lanugo**

The soft downy hair some pēpi/babies are born with, especially if premature. It falls out over time.

**Lipids**

Fat contained in a white fluid and given as part of intravenous therapy in pēpi/babies who are unable to feed by mouth.

**Liquor**

Amniotic fluid surrounding the pēpi/baby (in the uterus) until the membranes rupture.

**Long-line**

An IV sited in the arm or leg which sits well inside the body in a large vein.

**Lumbar puncture**

A needle inserted between the vertebra near the bottom of the spine to collect cerebrospinal fluid. It is sent to the laboratory to help in diagnosis.

**Meconium**

Greenish-black mucus like substance present in the intestines of newborn's. The first meconium is usually passed in the first 24 hours.

**Monitor**

A machine used to help observe functions such as breathing rate and heart rate. It is connected to the pēpi by electrodes and sensors.

**Mucus**

Fluid found in the nose and windpipe.

**Māmā/Mum time**

When parent rooms are not being utilized for whānau/families for discharge we offer the room to māmā/mothers for a couple of nights stay to enhance lactation and bonding.

**Murmur**

A heart sound heard through a stethoscope. There are many causes. An echo is usually done to determine the reason in your pēpi.

**Neonatal newborn**

Refers to the first 28 days after birth (however, many pēpi are in neonatal units for longer than this).

**Necrotizing enterocolitis**

(*NEC*) Inflammation or infection of the bowel wall of some infants.

**Nesting**

The art of creating a safe position with boundaries for premature pēpi in incubators.

**Neonatologist**

A doctor with special training and interest in premature and sick newborn's.

**Nasogastric tube**

(*NG tube*) A tube placed in the stomach – via the nose – to feed a pēpi too small or too tired to manage breast or bottle for all feeds.

**Ophthalmologist**

A doctor specialising in the treatment and diagnosis of eye defects, injuries and diseases.

**Oxygen**

A gas that makes up 21% of the air we breathe. When more oxygen is required it can be given up to 100% as a medical gas.

**Parent-time (rooming in)**

Māmā may stay in the neonatal unit for a 24/48-hour period to help bonding, to establish milk supply or just to be close to the pēpi for a period. This occurs more frequently when a pēpi is starting to demand feeds. Regardless of whether you breast or bottle feed māmā will come to live in prior to discharge.

**Pasteurised Donor Milk**

(*PDM*) Milk donated by māmā/mothers who have excess supply. The milk is pasteurised and frozen ready for use when māmā own supply of breastmilk is insufficient to meet the needs of their pēpi. Māmā own breastmilk is used first and supplemented with PDM until their own supply is sufficient. Consent is obtained before PDM is commenced.

**Phototherapy**

Treatment for jaundice that involves the use of blue light directed at the uncovered skin of the pēpi for a variable period of time.

**Pneumothorax**

Leakage of air from the lung into the chest cavity. It may cause breathing problems and need to be drained through a chest tube.

**Probiotics**

Added to pēpi feeds to improve gut function by adding good bacteria in powdered form to the premature gut.

**Pulse**

The rhythmic expansion of an artery caused by a heartbeat which may be felt with a finger.

**Pulse-oximeter**

Monitor that gives an oxygen saturation reading in the pēpi blood. It is usually attached to the hand or foot and has a red light.

**Plasma**

The fluid component of blood in which the red cells are suspended.

**Prone**

The position of lying the pēpi on his or her stomach.

**Quiet time**

Specified period during the day when pēpi and parents can rest undisturbed.

**Retina**

The backs of the eye where blood vessels supplying the light sensitive cells are found.

**Retinopathy of Prematurity**

(ROP) A condition that may affect the eyes of very premature pēpi. This condition results in the abnormal growth of blood vessels in the retina which is the layer of nerve tissue lining the back of the eyes. The retina does not fully develop until two weeks after term or 42 weeks. If your pēpi requires screening for ROP you will be fully informed of the process's required for screening and treatment.

**Sedation**

A drug given to settle a pēpi. Some ventilated pēpi require sedation.

**Septicaemia**

An infection in the bloodstream that affects the whole body.

**Small for gestational age**

(SGA) Pēpi born weighing much less than is considered optimum for their gestation.

**Sterile**

Free from contamination by living organism (bugs).

**Stimulation**

1. Developmental encouragement given to the pēpi by either singing, talking, reading, or having things to look at; or
2. Physical encouragement to continue breathing when an apnoea occurs, by gently running your finger over the pēpi chest.

**Sucrose**

Sugar dispensed by pharmacy in suspension used to relieve pain during minor painful procedures, eg. heel pricks

**Suction**

Aspiration of fluid and mucus from the lungs; usually by mechanical means.

**Sutures**

Surgical stitches.  
Fibrous bands of tissue that connect the bones of the skull.

**Surfactant**

Compounds that line the air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs of premature pēpi who have not had a chance to develop it naturally. It reduces the surface tension and therefore prevents lung collapse during expiration (breathing out).

**Syringe**

Used to either inject fluid or medication or to withdraw fluid from the body.

**Tachycardia**

Heart rate above 160 beats per minute.

**Tachypnoea**

Breathing rate above 60 breaths per minute.

**Total parental nutrition**

(TPN) Fluid given intravenously to promote your pēpi growth.

**Tube**

(ET tube) A plastic tube used to pass through the pēpi mouth or nose into the windpipe (trachea) and is connected to the ventilator.

**Umbilical arterial catheter**

(UAC) A small tube in the umbilicus (cord) used for taking off blood samples and for measuring blood pressure.

**Umbilical venous catheter**

(UVC) Same as UAC but used for giving IV fluids like TPN and blood top-ups.

**Ventilation**

Breathes done by the ventilator machine when pēpi has an endotracheal tube (ETT) through the mouth or a naso/pharyngeal tube through the nose into the trachea (windpipe) direct to the lungs.