

HOLIDAYS **WITH** PREMATURE BABIES

The Christmas season is especially difficult for families with premature babies. Whether they are in the NICU or at home, life is much more complex because you have to consider the special health needs of the baby. Here are some tips for families with premature babies to help make the holiday season a little brighter:

IN THE NICU:

Decorate the incubator/crib:

Ask family and friends to send you baby cards for the NICU to have its share of holiday cheer. Also ask your younger siblings and nieces and nephews to send drawings and images of the season as well.

Note: be sure to ask your nurse for instructions on how to decorate the incubator or crib for health and safety purposes.

Bring a vacation outfit or blanket:

If your baby can wear an outfit, consider asking a family member or friend to "gift" him a holiday outfit for the occasion. You don't have to focus on the holiday season, but a good outfit is special and can allow for some great photos for email/blog/website updates for others. If your baby can't wear clothes yet, then consider ordering a cute blanket that can be put over the incubator or used to swaddle the baby.

AT HOME EMERGENCY CLOSURE:

The Internet is your friend:

Whether you are a fan of Facebook or not, just like sending emails or updating a blog, give your family and friends access to the baby by providing some regular photos and quick updates. Also consider video talks for those who can no longer attend to say hello can I see the baby. If you don't have access to a computer with video chat capability, put it on your family wish list and friends to see if you can borrow one (or maybe they can all go in as a gift).

Christmas cheer, premature style:

Holiday cards are wonderful, but if you don't have a lot of time to get out into the germ festival world and buy cards and stamps and such, consider some simple homemade cards that you can copy. Here's the catch: include a baby's hand and foot print.

Visit www.PreemieWorld.com for more great tools.

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