



## Memorial service for Anthea Blake

Anthea Blake sadly died on the 31st October aged 69 years. During her long career as a neonatal nurse at UCLH she was a founder member of the Neonatal Nurses Association and its Treasurer for many years and was responsible for designing the distinctive NNA logo which is still in use today. She will be remembered for her compassion for the families she came in contact with and her charitable work, in particular the shoeboxes she organised and helped to fill to go to

children in the third world to give them a present at Christmas.

For all those who would like to celebrate Anthea's life, a memorial service is being held in London on Tuesday May 1st at 14.00 at All Souls Langham Place (next door to the BBC) WIB 3DA. The service will last for an hour and refreshments will be served afterwards. Everyone is welcome.

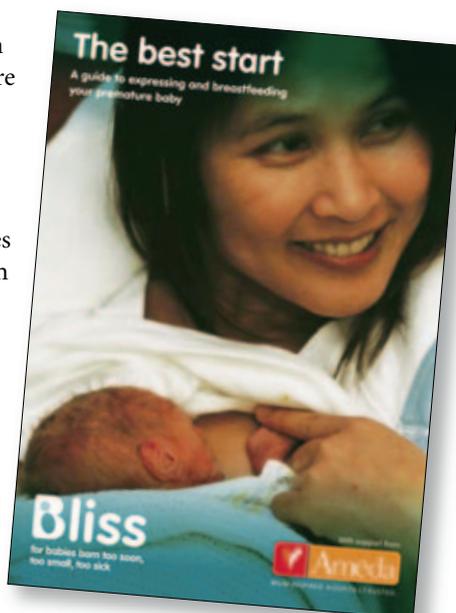
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## New and updated breastfeeding guide to help give premature babies 'The Best Start'

Bliss, has published an updated information guide for parents on breastfeeding premature and sick babies.

'The Best Start' guide provides guidance and instruction on how to express and breastfeed premature or sick babies. It also gives step-by-step advice on the practicalities of providing milk for babies, benefiting both mother and baby physically and emotionally.

The guide includes sections on preparing to express or breastfeed, breastfeeding your baby and a parent case study by Lisa Donelan who shares her experiences breastfeeding Niahm, who was born at 26 weeks.



Copies of the guide are available to download from the Bliss website, [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk) or by calling 0500 618 140.

## Breastfeeding linked to infant temperament

New evidence from the Medical Research Council (MRC) Epidemiology Unit, in Cambridge, suggests that breastfed babies may be more irritable than their bottle-fed counterparts. In a cohort study of 316 babies aged three months, published in the journal *PLoS One*<sup>1</sup>, breastfed infants were reported by their mothers to cry more and be harder to soothe than formula-fed babies. Rather than being a sign of stress, the researchers say irritability is a natural part of the dynamic communication between mothers and babies and should not deter women from breastfeeding.

Lead researcher Dr Ken Ong, a paediatrician from the MRC Epidemiology Unit in Cambridge, said:

"There is an overwhelming body of evidence supporting breastfeeding as the

normal and most healthy form of infant nutrition and our findings do not contradict this. Bottle-fed babies may appear more content, but research suggests that these infants may be over-nourished and gain weight too quickly. Our findings are essentially similar to other stages of life; people often find that eating is comforting.

"Rather than being put off breastfeeding, parents should have more realistic expectations of normal infant behaviour and should receive better understanding and support to cope with difficult infant behaviours if needed. These approaches could potentially promote successful breastfeeding, because currently many mothers attempt to breastfeed but give up after the first few weeks."

1. de Lauzon-Guillain B. et al. Breastfeeding and infant temperament at age three months. *PLoS One*. 2012;7(1):e29326.

## Newcastle RVI neonatal unit wins national award

Newcastle Royal Victoria Infirmary's neonatal unit was named Neonatal Unit of the Year at the Mother & Baby Big Heart Awards at the Park Lane Hilton, London on Monday 16 January 2012. The award (sponsored by Abbott, the global health care company) was presented to Claire Campbell and Yve Collingwood from the unit by Andy Cole, Chief Executive of Bliss, the special care baby charity.

The unit was nominated by mums Bev Wright, Gillian Baty and Marina Dodgson, who said: "It takes a team of very special people to turn the place where you experienced some of your most distressing moments of your life into a place that you don't want to leave behind. The unit is manically busy, but nothing is ever too much trouble, and care is constantly enhanced by small, personal touches: diaries, disposable cameras and gifts for special occasions. We will treasure these mementoes forever, and will never forget that we owe our children's lives to the people that work on this utterly miraculous unit."



Claire Campbell (left) and Yve Collingwood with Bliss Chief Executive Andy Cole.

## Running for Bliss

Natalie Allen, 36, from Longlevens, Gloucester is running the 2012 Virgin London Marathon for Bliss. Natalie qualified as a neonatal nurse in 2010 and works in the brand new women's centre in the neonatal intensive care unit at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. She was inspired to train as a neonatal nurse after losing her baby girl Maisie. Maisie was born at 34 weeks' gestation on December 3, 1997, weighing 4lbs 4oz but sadly died after 15 months in March 1999. Natalie went on to have two other daughters, Chloe aged nine and Aemilia aged 11.

Natalie also lost an amazing 88lbs at the same time as qualifying as a neonatal nurse so has already kick-started her training.



Natalie in training with her daughters Chloe and Aemilia.

Natalie says: "I feel really lucky to be able to do a job that I love, and to be able to bring genuine understanding of what a journey through the neonatal unit is really like for parents. I have been so impressed by the work Bliss does, and could not think of a better, and more meaningful, charity to run for. I will run with Maisie's picture on my vest, and feel proud that I am able to do something so worthwhile."



Natalie's inspiration for becoming a neonatal nurse, her daughter Maisie.

## Infant transport service Embrace helicopter transfers



Embrace doctors and nurses on a helicopter safety training day.

The infant and child transport service for Yorkshire and the Humber has expanded to offer air transport including a helicopter service. Embrace, the Yorkshire and Humber Infant and Children's Transport Service, which is hosted by Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust and is based in Barnsley, has developed links with Yorkshire Air Ambulance (YAA) to deliver the most effective transport of babies and children within the biggest region in England.

The collaboration has so far resulted in acute medical teams being transported to referring hospitals by helicopter in time-critical situations. After stabilising the patient, the teams continue to the destination by road but future developments will see the patients transferred by helicopter. Investment in personal protective equipment and staff training has allowed this exciting development to proceed in a safe and sustainable manner.

Dr Steve Hancock, lead clinician for paediatrics at Embrace, said: "We recognise that, whilst the vast majority of our journeys can be undertaken safely and appropriately by road, there are situations where the option to complete part or all of the journey by air would be advantageous to the patient and the service."

This new helicopter project complements the established fixed wing



A nurse practitioner transferring a premature baby in a fixed wing aircraft.

service that Embrace is able to offer.

Ten babies have been moved by Embrace either into or out of Yorkshire by aircraft since August 2011.

These have all been stable patients transferring back to their home unit, however the purchase of specialist equipment will open this option up to acute ventilated patients.

Ian Braithwaite, a senior transport nurse at Embrace said: "This is an exciting development. Our staff are gaining skills and knowledge through working with some very experienced partners in the aviation world, allowing Yorkshire and Humber infants and children to access the most appropriate transport means for their circumstances."

For more information contact [stephen.hancock@sch.nhs.uk](mailto:stephen.hancock@sch.nhs.uk) or [ian.braithwaite@sch.nhs.uk](mailto:ian.braithwaite@sch.nhs.uk)

## Virtual maternity unit for practising real life clinical skills



A virtual reality maternity unit, which will allow student midwives to practise their communication and clinical skills, has garnered national award recognition for a Nottingham midwife teacher.

The maternity unit built on The University of Nottingham's 'island' in Second Life – an online 3D virtual world – has been developed by Jenny Bailey, a midwife teacher in the University's Academic Division of Midwifery, as a teaching tool for her students.

Her innovative work on the project, and her commitment to innovation in midwifery education, has led to her being shortlisted for two awards at this year's Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Annual Midwifery Awards.

The University of Nottingham Maternity Unit in Second Life is designed to represent a range of similarities found within birthing units, with a birthing room that can be set up according to the type of birth that a mother has requested – including

birthing pool, gym ball and inhalation analgesia (gas and air).

The computer simulation allows students to use avatars to role play through a whole range of scenarios, many of which they may not otherwise encounter during real-life clinical practice.

With the midwife teacher taking on the part of the expectant mother, students can be put through their paces to assess how they react to every aspect of the experience, such as the clinical decisions they make or how well they communicate.

Jenny said: "Childbirth is a life-changing experience and some women can feel very vulnerable when they are in hospital so much so that it can affect their labour. Students need

to learn very quickly how to put women at ease and gain their trust.

"Using avatars removes some of the embarrassment which can be experienced in real role play and is intended to enhance clinical practice rather than replace it."

The Second Life simulation is so realistic that students can virtually practise clinical skills such as administering pain relief, checking the mother's contractions and taking her pulse and blood pressure, with the results of tests being displayed in the midwife's control panel on screen. They can also offer other support and reassurance, even sitting beside the mother on the floor and rubbing her back. The tutor, as the expectant mother, plays a leading role in the labour including deciding the results of various tests and when the baby or placenta is delivered.

After the virtual birth, the student midwives learn the procedures used during the first minutes and hour of a baby's life: to carry out the Apgar score, to assess baby's wellbeing, to record the weight or to help establish feeding.

More information is available from [jenny.bailey@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:jenny.bailey@nottingham.ac.uk)



## Vitamin D announcement welcomed by UK's leading nutrition organisation

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) today welcomed an announcement by the Government Chief Medical Officer, Sally Davies, regarding Vitamin D.

Following reports of Vitamin D deficiencies occurring within high risk groups, she said that the Government would review the issue of Vitamin D advice and they would "be contacting health professionals on the need to

prescribe and recommend Vitamin D supplements to at-risk groups." She also added: "The Department of Health has also asked the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition to review the important issue of current dietary recommendations on Vitamin D."

Currently, the Department of Health advises Vitamin D supplements for all pregnant women and children under

the age of five. Other at-risk groups who could benefit include:

- Women who breastfeed.
- People who are not exposed to much sun, eg those confined indoors for long periods, and those who cover their skin for cultural reasons.
- People aged 65+

More information at [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)