

Helping Boost Patient Satisfaction and Increase Parental Confidence to Care for their Baby in the NICU

In this feature, Neonatal Intensive Care interviews clinicians and healthcare providers about the actual application of specific products and therapies. This interview is with Laura M Daly, RN, CPHQ, LHRM, Associate Director of Quality & Patient Safety at Holtz Children's Hospital & The Women's Hospital at Jackson Memorial and Kylie Rowlands RN, CNM, MSN, SANE A, Director NBSCC & Pedi/NICU Transport Team at Holtz Children's Hospital.

How did you find out about the Safer Way to Sleep hospital program?

We were at a conference for neonatal nurses and ran into someone who was representing HALO® and their Safer Way to Sleep® Hospital Modeling Program. I (KR) had also worked at another facility where they were already using the HALO® SleepSack® Swaddle, but I was unaware of the various elements of the program.

How do you use the HALO SleepSack Swaddle?

We use them for any baby 35 weeks and above because prior to that we position them for developmental growth and for other medical reasons. At 35 weeks corrected age the babies are stable, and this milestone coincides with the time when we can put baby on his back and use the HALO SleepSack Swaddle. (We also use these safe sleep wearable blankets on all full-term babies in the well-baby nursery.)

Did you find the use of a SleepSack Swaddle facilitated care of the babies? Did parents feel more comfortable holding their baby in a HALO SleepSack Swaddle as there was no longer the fear of a blanket coming undone?

We found that when we started using the HALO SleepSack Swaddle in the NICU, parents became more relaxed about handling and caring for their baby. They no longer worry about baby getting cold as there is no need to totally undress baby for a diaper change as the HALO SleepSack Swaddle unzips bottom to top so baby remains clothed when changing a diaper. The garment actually helps the baby retain his body warmth. There is also a huge advantage when parents do skin-to-skin contact with baby — an important part of the bonding process. This is particularly true for mothers who are often undressed from the waist up. The fact that the HALO SleepSack Swaddle remains on the baby and is open not only keeps the baby warm but it also provides some coverage/modesty for the mother, often eliminating the need for total privacy. The HALO SleepSack Swaddle is hassle-free and actually gives parents greater confidence when holding their baby.

How do you use the tools of the program to teach safe sleep to parents?

At the onset of the baby's stay in the NICU we state that we maintain a safe sleep environment, we practice safe sleep and we ask for a commitment from the parents to do the same. We have many teaching materials available to us from HALO, Cribs for Kids and the Jackson Health Foundation to properly teach safe sleep to parents. We found flip charts to be the most effective, and at the end of the baby's stay parents receive a certificate of graduation that certifies that they know how to use a HALO SleepSack Swaddle and how to create a safe sleep environment at home. (We have also learned that through the Jackson Health Foundation all babies in the well-baby nursery and step-down NICU in our three hospitals, Jackson Memorial, Jackson North Medical Center, and Jackson South Community Hospital, will receive a new HALO SleepSack Swaddle as a gift to encourage and support all they have learned in the hospital about safe sleep. Our three hospitals combined deliver nearly 10,000 babies per year.)

Prior to the implementation of the program did you regularly review safe sleep protocol with your NICU nurses?

We are always reviewing safe sleep protocol and practice with the nurses in the NICU and in other areas of maternity in the hospital. It's a process of reinforcement and re-education which is ongoing.

Did the program have an impact in terms of patient satisfaction and their experience in the NICU?

Definitely – parents like things that are visual and look nice, and obviously seeing their babies dressed in a HALO SleepSack Swaddle is a pleasing sight. But far more importantly, they understand the benefit of what we are doing to keep their baby safe. It makes them feel confident that the staff is looking out for their baby's safety. The use of the HALO SleepSack Swaddle also gives parents the confidence to participate in baby's care in terms of bonding and diaper change...it provides a sense of ease that they will transfer to the home.

What other safety programs have you implemented in the hospital and have you seen positive results?

We have an active injury prevention program with community outreach that is ongoing. Among the areas we have focused on are fire safety and bicycle (helmet) safety. As a result of these

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efforts we have seen a measurable reduction in ER visits for fire and/or bicycle accidents.

Are you a safe sleep certified hospital?

We are currently in the process of seeking the designation as a Safe Sleep Certified Hospital through Cribs for Kids. We are very close to completion, and using the HALO SleepSack Swaddle is an important part of the process.

Would you recommend the program to other hospitals?

Absolutely. We definitely think the Safer Way to Sleep Modeling program makes it easier for parents to care for baby which also makes for happier parents. We are aiming for a happy, healthy home for our babies after they leave the hospital, and this helps to contribute to that goal.

The HALO SleepSack Swaddles are aesthetically more pleasing to everyone including the staff, but they are first and foremost helping us keep babies safe and secure. That's the parents (and our staff's) top priority. In addition the program allows us to demonstrate the safe sleep techniques we want the parents to mimic at home, so seeing us use a wearable blanket they can also use at home helps to make the parents feel more confident after they leave the hospital. Parents put a lot of trust in healthcare professionals, particularly when it comes to learning how to care for baby properly.

We have also found that the concept of modeling behavior that you want the parents to adopt helps our staff understand the tremendous impact they have on these parents and on the health

and well-being of their patients. It's a mindfulness that is present among the staff that we have not seen before.



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- Designed to meet the special requirements for hospital laundries.
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