

☀️🌟 Useful information for members of Emily's Star Knitting Army ☀️🌟



Emily's Gift Neonatal Boxes are made for both boys and girls in appropriate for 3lb, 4lb and 5lb weights. Included in each box that Emily's Star creates is a blanket, 2 bonding squares, a hat and a jacket / cardigan, all of which have been kindly knitted or crocheted and then donated by an army of volunteers.

Below is some information that we hope you will find useful and enable you to join in helping to create much needed items for the boxes.

Blankets need to be between 14" - 15" (35.6 – 38.1cm) square and be created using a pattern with no holes, as tiny fingers and toes can get caught. Hospitals will not accept blankets with holes in the pattern.

Bonding Squares need to be 5" (12.7cm) square and be made in matching pairs. Again no holes please, for fingers and toes to get caught in.

Bonding squares are provided to mums whose babies are in a neonatal unit. Each mum is given two squares, one is kept with baby & one is kept on mum's body, every 12 hours they are swapped.... They help mum & baby to bond by smell in cases where they can't physically touch.

Jackets / cardigans should be long-sleeved (now preferred by many hospitals) and any style suitable for a tiny baby. Many short-sleeved jackets can easily be converted into ones with long sleeves by just knitting a few more rows onto each sleeve. Jackets and cardigans can be knitted / crocheted in either 4ply or double knitting yarn. Please use baby acrylic, as this is most suitable for delicate skin and multiple washes. Most baby colours are fine to use and we are always in need of white and cream items.

Document created for use by Emily's Star Knitting Army, who knit on behalf of Emily's Star to provide knitted/crocheted items for Emily's gift neonatal boxes.

Jacket / cardigan measurements

Finished chest measurements for the jacket should be –

3lb baby 12" (30.5 cm)

4lb baby 13" (33cm)

5lb baby 14" (35.6 cm)

so that when a jacket or cardigan is laid flat as in the photo, the chest should measure

6" (15.2 cm), 6.5" (16.5cm) or 7" (17.8 cm) respectively.



Hat sizes need to be -

3lb circumference 9-10" (without stretch) and height of minimum 4"

4lb circumference 10-11" (without stretch) and height of minimum 4.5"

5lb circumference 11-12" (without stretch) and height of minimum 5"



All the hats will need to have some stretch of approximately a further 2 inches so they can be stretched to pop on to babies head, allow for growing room, or a slightly larger head v the babies weight.

The cast on edge or foundation row should not be too tight to allow for stretch, if you are a tight knitter you may find it helps to use a larger needle to cast on with.

Bootees and mittens

Although we do not routinely include bootees in the neonatal boxes, if you would like to knit / crochet them as part of the set you are making, then we will gladly include them too.

Please do not use a pattern with holes, as tiny toes could get caught.

Knitted / crocheted mittens are not used with premature babies and therefore we do not require them.

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A complete set of knitted / crocheted items comprises of –

- 14" - 15" (35.6 – 38.1cm) blanket
- 2 matching 5" (12.7cm) bonding squares
- Jacket
- Hat



For those knitters who prefer not to knit complete sets, we also need **smaller / mini sets** consisting of either -

- 14" -15" (35.6 – 38.1cm) blanket and 2 matching 5" (12.7cm) bonding squares (secured together please)
- or
- Jacket and matching hat (secured together)

Sets for Micro Boxes –

We now supply some hospitals with micro boxes, which are for babies below 3lb in weight.

For these we need the following in either white, cream or mint green please -

- 14" - 15" (35.6 – 38.1cm) blanket
- 2 matching 5" (12.7cm) bonding squares
- 2 x small hats (8" circumference, 4" high). An ideal pattern is the **small premature** size found at <https://mariannaslazydaisydays.blogspot.com/2017/02/babbity-hats-in-2-colours.html>

Sets for babies over 5lb -

We supply a few boxes to Milton Keynes University Hospital which are for babies over 5lb, but need to be in the NNU due being poorly, rather than being premature.

For these boxes we need -

- 24" square blanket and 2 matching 5" (12.7cm) bonding squares (secured together please)

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Suitable Yarn

Baby acrylic in either 4ply or double knitting yarn is ideal to use as it is less likely to irritate the skin and withstands multiple washing.

Chunky yarn can also be used for blankets, but is too thick for any other items.

Almost all colours that are sold as baby yarn are suitable. White and cream items are always needed.

Please do not use metal based sparkly thread, as this could get hot and burn a baby in an incubator.

Tension and Tension Squares

Please check your **tension** before starting to knit or crochet your item, as not all makes of double knit or 4ply yarn knits up to the same size. The best way to do this is to knit a tension square and instructions on how to do this can be found by following the link -

<http://www.learn2knit.co.uk/knitting/tension.php>

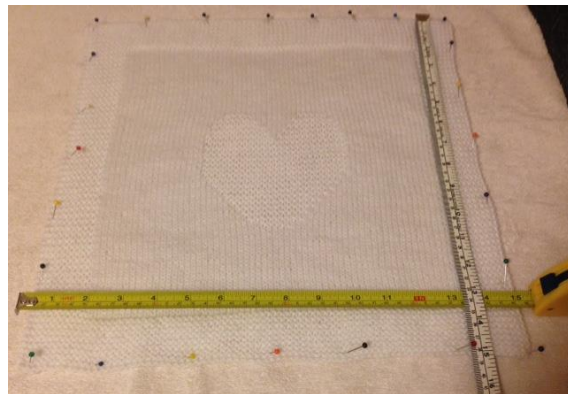
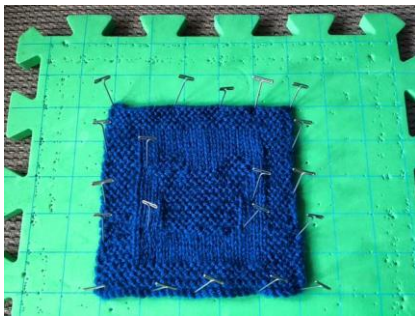


Yarn labels will indicate the tension that the yarn. This label is saying that using 4mm needles (UK 8), a knitter should expect to achieve a 10 cm (approx. 4 inch) square, when they have cast on 22 stitches and worked 30 rows of stocking stitch (one row knit and the next row purl).

How to block a piece of knitting

You may find you will need to block some work to help flatten it.

If a bonding square or blanket is curling, puckering or not quite square, pin it out to the right size, either on a foam blocking square, ironing board or even a clean towel on a spare bedroom floor. Add extra pins to hold down any puckered areas too. Check that all measurements are correct.



Then either spray lightly with water and hover over your work with a steam iron (do not press down with the iron, you will 'kill' the wool), or just spray with warm water. Leave your work to dry and you should find that it then retains a nice shape.

Washing of items

We rely on knitters' discretion regarding the washing of items. If the yarn is new, kept clean and away from animals, coffee and smoke, then garments do not necessarily need washing. However if you feel they could do with a freshen up, please use a non-biological detergent.

Links to suitable patterns to knit / crochet for Emily's Gift Neonatal Boxes?

(Please note that this list is only a small selection of suitable premature baby patterns)

In the Emily's Star Knitting Army files on Facebook

<http://www.emilysstar.co.uk/knitting-patterns.html>

[Emily's Cardigan](#)

<http://www.ravelry.com/designers/marianna-mel>

<https://mariannaslazydaisydays.blogspot.com/2015/07/little-babbity-premature-baby-set.html>

<http://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/premature-babys-cardigan-hat-and-bootees>

Fund Raising

We are always in need of knitting / crocheting items for us to sell at our events. The money raised enables Emily's Star to continue and expand its valuable work. Items needed include -

Dolls clothes

Barbie clothes

Baby blankets 24" square, up to cot size

18" – 22" baby cardigans

'Soldier, snowman, Father Christmas and girl' knitted smartie characters

Dinosaurs, large chicks and other animals which can be stuffed with a small packets of haribos

Chicks / rabbits for creme eggs

Christmas chocolate orange covers

Patterns for some of the above can be found in the Emily's Star Knitting Army Facebook files, Pinterest or use any of Marion Leys patterns.

<https://www.ravelry.com/designers/marianna-mel>

http://jeangreenhowe.com/Images/Easter_Egg_Treats.pdf

All eyes/ noses/beaks should be sewn on or embroidered please.

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Where to send / drop off finished items

Emily's Star

8 Wimborne Crescent

Westcroft

Milton Keynes

MK4 4DE

Tel – 01908 506870

Opening hours –

Monday – Friday 10.00am –2.00pm

Little Emm's Hairstudio

22a Woburn Rd,

Heath & Reach,

Nr Leighton Buzzard,

Beds,LU7 0AR.

Tel: 01525 237687.

Opening hours

Tues-Thurs 8.15am-5pm

Fri 8.15am-7pm

Sat 8.15am-1pm

Sainsburys

2 Engaine Drive

Shenley Church End

Milton Keynes

MK5 6JU

Dobbies Garden Centre

Fenny Stratford – Please leave knitting in the Emily's Star box, located near the community board

Contacts

If you have any queries regarding knitting / crocheting for Emily's Gift Neonatal Boxes then please post a message on the Emily's Star Knitting Army Facebook page

or email the knitting team at knitting@emilysstar.co.uk

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Emily's Star is extremely proud to support all of these amazing neonatal units in England. Each one of these units receives a regular supply of boxes from us completely free of charge....

Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Scunthorpe General Hospital

Southend Hospital

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital

Maternity , Mannor hospital walsall

Gloucester Royal Hospital Womens Centre

Macclesfield District General Hospital

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust

St Richard's Hospital

Stoke Mandeville Hospital

George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust

[Burnley General Hospital](#)

Coventry & Warwickshire Hospital

James Cook University Hospital

Luton and Dunstable University Hospital

John Radcliffe Hospital

Lister Hospital

Bedford Hospital

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust / Evelina London Children's Hospital