

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



Emily's Gift Neonatal Box

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



Mini Pack

Please note, that only knitted items are now added to the boxes and mini packs, due to crocheted items potentially having holes which could catch tiny fingers or toes and sleeves in jackets not having sufficient 'give'.

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.

If you are knitting a blanket or bonding squares using a **Corner to Corner pattern**, please can you ensure that the increases are made by the kfb (knit into the front and back of the stitch) rather than the yf (yarn forward)/yon (yarn over needle) method, again to avoid holes being formed.

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.

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

Jackets / cardigans should be **long-sleeved** (preferred by many hospitals) and knitted in any style suitable for a tiny baby. Many short-sleeved jackets can easily be converted into ones with long sleeves by knitting a few more rows onto each sleeve. Jackets and cardigans can be knitted in either 4ply or double knitting yarn. A lace – type pattern may be used for the body of the cardigan, however the long sleeves must be plain, with no holes to catch small fingers. Please use baby acrylic or cotton, 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 items.

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.

Knitted mittens and booties are not used with premature babies and therefore are not needed for the neonatal boxes or mini packs,

Emily's Star does not send **Octopuses or knitted/ crocheted toys** to hospitals or add them to the neonatal boxes, due to the safety issues surrounding their construction.

A complete set of knitted items for either a box for a premature baby or a mini set comprises of

–

14" - 15" (35.6 – 38.1cm) blanket

2 matching 5" (12.7cm) bonding squares

Jacket with long sleeves

Hat



For those knitters who prefer not to knit complete sets, we also need **smaller 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 MKUH 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>

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Sets for babies over 5lb -

We supply gift boxes to Milton Keynes University Hospital which are for babies over 5lb, but need to be in the NNU due to 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)

Blankets for children and young people registered with Emily's Star

These blankets can be either knitted or crocheted in acrylic DK yarn and should be made in sizes between 30" x 40" up to single bed size.

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. Cotton yarn can also be used.

Aran yarn can be used for blankets that are sold by the charity to raise valuable funds, but is too thick for any other items.

White, baby pink, baby blue, very pale grey and mint green are the most ideal colours to use for the sets please. Cream is fine too if a complete set is being made – it's a tricky colour to match if only a part set is sent in.

Yellow / lemon yarn is not an ideal colour to use for small premature babies, who are often jaundiced, as this can make them appear even more 'yellow' and for that reason we ask that you do not knit items in this colour in 3lb and 4lb sizes. We are able to use jackets and hats made with lemon yarn for 5lb babies, as well as blankets and hats.

While variegated yarns are a popular choice for some knitters, we have found that blankets and bonding squares which incorporate a motif are better suited to the use of a plain yarn, saving the variegated yarn for the plainer blankets and bonding squares.

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

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Tension and Tension Squares

Please check your **tension** before starting to knit 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>

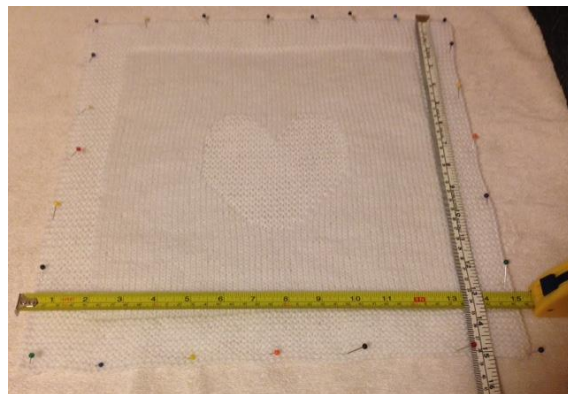
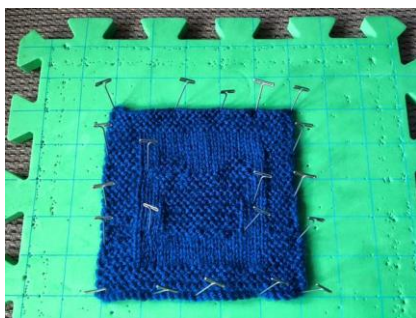


Yarn labels will indicate the tension that the yarn. This label is saying that using 4mm needles (UK 8), a knitter should expect to achieve a 10 cm (approx. 4 inch) square, when they have cast on 22 stitches and worked 30 rows of stocking stitch (one row knit and the next row purl).

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 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>

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

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

Fund Raising

We really appreciate items suitable for us to sell at our events. The money raised enables Emily's Star to continue and expand its valuable work. However, Emily's Star has limited space to store items ready for an event, so please check on the Emily's Star Knitting Army Facebook page for up to date requirements and when any items need to be sent.

Suitable items for sale could include -

Dolls clothes

Barbie clothes

Baby blankets 24" square, up to cot size. These can either be knitted or crocheted.

18" – 22" baby cardigans

Easter egg covers

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

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>

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

Please note, that we cannot accept knitted / crocheted toys due to rules surrounding CE testing.

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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 for Emily's Gift Neonatal Boxes then please post a message on the Emily's Star Knitting Army Facebook page

or email the Emily's Star team at contact@emilysstar.co.uk

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Emily's Star is extremely proud to support Milton Keynes University Hospital with a regular supply of boxes from us and to supply mini packs for premature babies born in any NNU in the UK. All of these are donated by the charity completely free of charge.

We estimate that up to 2000 complete sets of knitted items will be needed every year!

The mini packs can be ordered by nurses, midwives, friends, family or the parents. The only rule is they must be sent to the hospital to ensure they go to the right place.

The mini packs contain the most essential items that parents need, premature sized clothing & knitting.

Each mini set consists of;

1 vest & 1 baby grow in 3 lb, 4lb or 5lb in pink or blue.

1 knitted blanket

1 knitted hat

1 knitted cardigan

1 knitted set of bonding squares

A notepad & pen

Information leaflets

Premature baby milestone cards.

All of the items are wrapped in tissue paper & posted in a pink mailing bag.

Mini packs can be ordered [here](#)