

Skin-To-Skin (Kangaroo) Care For Infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

What is Kangaroo Care?

- Skin-to-skin, or Kangaroo Care, is a special way to hold your baby skin-to-skin upright between your breasts.
- Your baby is dressed only in a diaper and a hat.
- Your shirt or blouse is closed around your baby with a blanket on top.
- Fathers and others may do Kangaroo Care, but mothers do it most often because of the chance for breastfeeding.



How can my baby and I benefit from Kangaroo Care?

- Touching and cuddling skin-to-skin help you nurture and bond with your baby.
- You may feel more relaxed and “in touch” with your baby’s needs as you hold and respond to him.
- Moms who do Kangaroo Care in the hospital usually make more milk and breastfeed longer at home.
- The close physical contact with your baby helps your body make infection-fighting factors to protect both you and your baby.
- When compared to incubator care, babies held skin-to-skin breathe more regularly, have more stable oxygen levels and body temperatures, and have longer periods of deep sleep.
- When babies are relaxed and stable in Kangaroo Care, they can use all their energy to grow.
- Kangaroo Care can help calm some of your fears and worries about the intensive care environment.

When can my baby and I do Kangaroo Care?

- When your baby is stable. Most babies are off the ventilator, but some are not.
- When high-risk IV lines are removed.
- When your baby’s doctor writes the order for Kangaroo Care.

What do I do?

- You will need to shower or bathe daily because your baby will be against your skin.
- Wear a bra and shirt or top that opens in the front, or change into a hospital gown with the opening in the front.
- Your baby’s nurse will find you a comfortable chair, blankets, and, if you wish, screens for your privacy.
- Your baby’s nurse will help you position your baby comfortable upright on your chest.

How will I know my baby is OK?

- Your baby will stay on the same heart rate and breathing rate monitor as before. If your baby is on an oxygen monitor, it will also stay on.
- Your baby's temperature will be checked – but most babies get warmer, not cooler on your skin!
- You will feel your baby's breathing and other movements, learning his likes and dislikes quickly.

How long may I do Kangaroo Care?

- Every baby is different, so your baby's doctor or nurse may ask you to build up time slowly.
- Since most babies are MORE stable in Kangaroo care, we encourage you to spend as many minutes or hours with you baby in Kangaroo care as you are able.