

What Is Skin-to-Skin Care?

Skin-to-skin or kangaroo care is the practice of placing a baby, dressed only in a diaper, upright against the bare chest of his or her parent. Once baby is skin to skin, a blanket and hat can be placed to keep baby warm.



The first time a baby is held by their parent can be scary, but the NICU staff will be there to make sure that the baby is safe and parents are comfortable.



Skin-to-Skin/ Kangaroo Care

A Place Where You
Belong



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What are the Benefits of Skin-to-Skin?

Research clearly shows that the interruption that occurs when a preterm or sick baby is separated from their parents can have a significant impact on both the parent and baby. The importance of kangaroo care can not be over-emphasized.

For Baby	For Mom	For Dad
• Stays warmer	• Decreases stress	• Decreases stress and anxiety
• Becomes much calmer	• Increases attachment	• Increases attachment
• Breastfeeds sooner and longer	• Increases milk production	• Increases feelings of protectiveness towards family
• Lowers stress	• Learns behavior and feeding cues better	• Increases sense of involvement
• Increases immune protection	• Breastfeeds more easily	
• Improves quality of sleep	• Increases confidence in caring for her baby	
• Stabilizes the baby's heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, temperature and improves their ability to absorb oxygen	• Decreases depression and anxiety	
• Improves attachment		

How To Do Kangaroo Care

Kangaroo care can be done at your baby's bedside while you sit in a chair. We provide curtains or screens for privacy.

- Let your baby's nurses know when you will be coming so they can plan for it. You should plan to spend at least **1 hour** doing kangaroo care.
- Shower before coming to the hospital. Check your chest for rashes or open wounds. If you have these, do not do kangaroo care until your skin has healed.
- Do not smoke or use perfume or scented lotions before doing kangaroo care.
- Make yourself comfortable. However, you should never fall asleep while holding your baby.

If your baby has a breathing tube:

- A nurse and respiratory therapist will help place your baby skin to skin to make sure the breathing tube remains secured. To prevent an unplanned extubation it should always be two people moving the baby, one to hold baby the other one to ensure tube remains secured.
- If you are uncomfortable or need to change position during kangaroo care or holding, call the nurse first for help. Make sure your call light is close before the nurse hands you your baby.
- Do not put your baby back into bed or reposition your baby by yourself.



Exclusion Criteria

- Acute or sudden deterioration In clinical condition within the past 24 hours.
- Vasopressor medication use such as: Dopamine, Dobutamine, Epinephrine
- Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension
- Chest Tube In place
- Hyperbilirubinemia-Condition in which there is too much bilirubin in the blood.
- Open abdominal, spinal or surgical defects
- Parents with contagious skin lesions or other communicable diseases.
- Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis, with a physician's order.

Do Not Worry! The nurses and doctors will always be consulted In order to make sure your baby Is able to safely perform kangaroo care.



If your baby Is not ready for skin-to-skin holding, the following is encouraged:

- Gentle, still touch
- Hand swaddling (hand hugs)
- Music Therapy at the bedside
- Reading at the bedside