

Kangaroo Care

When a baby is born too soon (premature), it can be stressful for a family. It may feel like your baby is far away even though you are nearby as your baby is cared for. Your baby is in a special bed called an isolette. It helps keep your baby warm. There are many people caring for your baby. You may worry about your baby's health, and how your baby will grow and develop. You may also worry about how you will care for your baby at home.



What is kangaroo care?

Kangaroo care is a way that you can help care for your baby. It will help you feel closer to your baby.

- This care uses skin-to-skin contact between you and your baby. It helps you provide warmth and comfort.
- Studies show that kangaroo care helps babies. Some babies who have kangaroo care are sent home from the hospital sooner than babies who did not have the same care.

Why do kangaroo care?

Studies have shown that babies who receive kangaroo care:

- Cry less
- Eat better
- Breathe easier
- Sleep longer
- Gain weight better
- Stay in the hospital for less time

Kangaroo care is safe for babies who are stable. Kangaroo care may also be helpful for you. It may help you:

- Feel closer to your baby.
- Feel more satisfied as a new parent.
- Feel more confident about caring for your baby.

How is it done?

You will be able to do kangaroo care right at your baby's bedside. A comfortable chair, like a recliner, will be available for you. You will need to unbutton your shirt or blouse, or change into a front opening jacket. You will also need to remove your bra or undershirt. Your baby will wear only a diaper. For privacy, screens may be provided. You will hold your baby next to your chest, skin-to-skin. There will be no clothes between you and your baby. A small, warm blanket will be used to cover your baby's back. Your baby may be breastfed or given a feeding during kangaroo care.



How often can I do it?

This will depend on how well your baby does during kangaroo care. You will plan the times with your baby's nurse. One hour at a time is a good start. This gives your baby a nice length of time to sleep during kangaroo care. Your baby's nurse will check with you often to see how your baby is doing.

What about other equipment?

Equipment and monitors that your baby has will not change during kangaroo care. Heart and breathing rates, as well as temperature will be monitored. This helps the baby's nurse to know how your baby is doing.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.