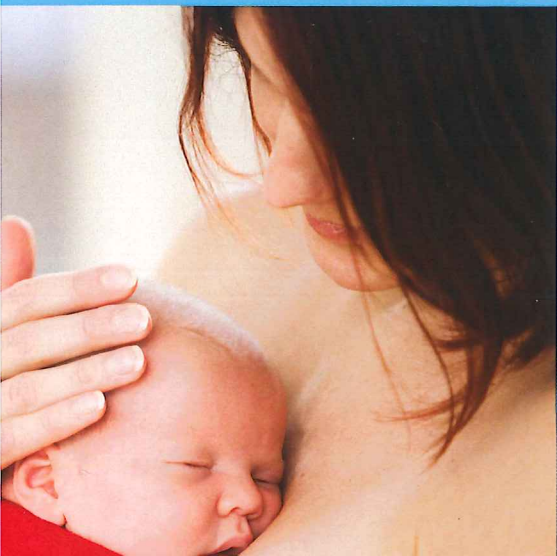


Having your baby in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) can be stressful for a family. Rest assured that we will do everything in our power to help you and your child establish a bond, and will get your baby healthy and discharged home as soon as possible.



KANGAROO

CARE

IN THE NICU

WHAT IS KANGAROO CARE?

Kangaroo care, also known as skin-to-skin care, is a special way to hold your baby. It allows you, the parent, to spend time with your baby and share the warmth that only you can provide. It is one of the best ways to help your baby grow and become more stable while recovering in the NICU.

HOW IS KANGAROO CARE DONE?

Both mom and dad can provide kangaroo care. You are encouraged to wear a front button shirt that can be opened for direct skin contact with your baby. Do not wear any perfumes or clothing that has been exposed to cigarette smoke. Your baby – wearing only a diaper and hat – is placed in an upright position directly on your chest. Your baby's head is turned and placed over your heart. Your body heat will provide warmth for your baby. The button shirt and a blanket are then placed over the baby. The curtain in the room will be closed to decrease extra stimulation around you and provide quiet time. It is important for your infant to rest during this time.

HOW WILL MY BABY REACT?

Your baby will take a few minutes to settle in and become stable. A nurse will monitor your baby's vital signs. Once settled, most babies become comfortable and fall asleep. To achieve the best response, kangaroo care should be done for at least one hour. This will allow the baby to remain comfortable and restful for a period of time. If your baby does not tolerate it, they can be placed back in the isolette and you can try again another time.

WHY DOES KANGAROO CARE WORK?

During kangaroo care, the infant usually snuggles between the mother's breasts or on the dad's chest and falls asleep. The breasts actually change temperature to accommodate the baby's temperature needs. The extra sleep the baby gets while being skin to skin conserves energy and helps them grow and gain weight. While doing kangaroo care, the upright position is most comfortable for the baby and helps stabilize breathing and heart rate. Research shows it also improves digestion and brain development.

WHEN CAN MY BABY DO KANGAROO CARE?

Most NICU babies can participate in kangaroo care, although there are some exceptions. Your baby must be medically stable – for example, not requiring high ventilator settings or medication to help blood pressure, etc. This may change from visit to visit. Your baby's nurses and doctors will work with you to decide when your baby is ready to begin kangaroo care.

BENEFITS OF KANGAROO CARE:

- Helps your premature infant grow
- Increases restful sleep for your baby
- Stimulates brain development
- Stabilizes heart rate, breathing patterns and body temperature
- Decreases oxygen needs
- Increases your breast milk production
- Improves parent/infant bonding
- Helps you become more involved in caring for your infant
- May help your baby go home from the hospital earlier



**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,
PLEASE ASK YOUR BABY'S
NURSE OR PHYSICIAN.**