

Kangaroo Care

What is kangaroo care?

Kangaroo Care is skin to skin contact while holding a diapered baby on a parent's bare chest under a light shirt or blanket. It has many good things to offer you and your baby that will help you grow close.

Benefits for parents include:

- improved bonding and closeness to your baby
- feeling better about being a parent
- improved milk supply
- helping you get to know your baby
- less anxiety and sadness

Benefits for your baby include:

- helps your baby stay warm
- better sleep
- less crying
- improved weight gain
- protection from too many lights and noises

Some guidelines for kangarooing with your baby include:

- Babies born healthy can begin skin to skin care as soon as they are born.
- Skin to skin holding is best. It is better for you and your baby to be skin to skin instead of having blankets or clothing between you and your baby's skin.
- Babies of any size and age can be held.
- Giving your baby kangaroo care for at least 65 minutes is best. This amount of time will allow your baby to become quiet and complete one sleep/wake cycle. Your baby can be held longer if he/she does well.
- We encourage you to kangaroo with your baby as much and as long as you both want.

- If your baby needs phototherapy lights for jaundice, you can kangaroo with your baby but for shorter periods of time.
- All parents, including Dad, are encouraged to kangaroo their baby!

If your baby is in the NICU:

- How often and how long you will kangaroo your baby will depend on whether your baby is having a good day or a bad day.
- Your baby's provider and nurse will help you decide when your baby is doing well enough to be held skin to skin.
- If your baby is getting a tube feeding while being held skin to skin, it is best not to rock or bounce while your baby is being fed. Your baby may be ready to suckle at Mom's breast while getting Kangaroo Care, even if he/she is too young to eat by mouth. A premature baby can practice nursing without getting too much milk. After the tube feeding, it is best to hold still for an hour to help your baby get into a deep sleep before placing him/her baby back to sleep in the crib.
- A baby with a breathing tube may be held skin to skin by parents, when stable. The healthcare team will help you both get comfortable.
- To see a short video filmed at a NICU similar to St. Cloud Hospital about the benefits of skin to skin even for NICU babies with various tubes, go here: www.nationwidechildrens.org/kangaroo-care