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## What is kangaroo care?

Kangaroo care is a way of holding your baby so that your skin and your baby's skin are next to each other. It may also help you and your baby feel a strong bond.

## Who can do kangaroo care?

Mothers and fathers can both do kangaroo care.

## Why should I do kangaroo care?

Babies who have kangaroo care may:

- Stay warmer.
- Cry less and sleep longer.
- Eat and gain weight better.
- Breathe easier.
- Get sick less.
- Stay in the hospital for less time.

Your baby feels closer to you because your baby:

- Hears your heartbeat.
- Feels rocked by how your chest moves when you breathe.
- Knows your scent or how you smell.
- Feels safe and warm when they are held close to you.

Kangaroo care may help you, too. It may help you to:

- Feel closer to your baby.
- Feel more confident about taking care of your baby

Kangaroo care may help mothers who breastfeed by increasing milk production.

## When should I do kangaroo care?

Ask the care team if your baby is ready to do kangaroo care. The right time is based on your baby's condition, not your baby's weight or age.

## Where should I do kangaroo care?

You may do kangaroo care by your baby's bedside while your baby is in the hospital. The care team can give you a comfortable chair, foot stool, gown and privacy screen.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Kangaroo care, continued

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## How do I do kangaroo care?

Follow these steps and ask your baby's nurse for more details:

- Dress your baby in only a diaper.
- Unbutton your shirt or blouse. Remove your bra or undershirt so your skin touches your baby's skin. You may also wear a hospital gown or robe you bring from home.
- Hold your baby next to your chest, skin-to-skin. Make sure there are no clothes or blankets between you and your baby. You may use a small blanket to cover your baby's back or put a hat on your baby's head.
- Try to do kangaroo care with your baby for at least 1 hour each time.
- Complete all self-care activities before doing kangaroo care.
- Stay awake to help keep your baby safe.
- Use this as a time to interact and bond with your baby. Talk and sing to your baby.



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Ask the care team if your baby can do kangaroo care when they are breastfeeding or getting bottle fed.

## How will my baby react to kangaroo care?

- Most babies enjoy kangaroo care. It may take your baby a little while to get used to it.
- Your baby's nurse may check your baby's temperature before and during kangaroo care.
- Watch your baby to see how they react to kangaroo care.

## What happens after my baby goes home?

You may continue to hold your baby next to your skin at home. Some good times to do this may be:

- After a bath.
- When awake in the morning.
- When eating.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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