

# Starting Kangaroo Care

- Many infants can begin Kangaroo Care at a very early age. You and Your baby's care team will decide when it is best to begin.
- Shower before coming to the hospital. Be sure you are free from sickness, wounds, or any skin rashes. Do not wear perfumes or fragrances. They can be irritating to your baby's breathing. Avoid smoking prior to Kangaroo Care also.
- You should plan to hold your baby as long as you and your baby's nurse feel that he or she is calm and comfortable. In time, you will be able to hold your baby for longer periods of time.
- Your nurse will carefully place your baby against your chest. Since your baby will be naked except for a diaper, you and your baby will be able to feel each other's warmth immediately.
- Place one hand on your baby's buttocks and one hand on their back for support. Your baby's arms and legs should be flexed and their head should be turned for air entry.
- Let your baby rest. This is not a time for play. Avoid use of all electronic devices so your baby has your undivided attention.

*"Everything was perfect. I am finally complete. It's the best feeling in the world."* - NICU parent after kangaroo care for the first time.

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## Kangaroo Care



**A Very Special Way  
to Hold Your Very  
Special Baby**

**A Guide for Parents in the  
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit**

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## Kangaroo Care is a form of Skin to Skin contact between you and your baby!

Both parents can give Kangaroo care. Your baby is dressed only in a diaper and is placed with his or her tummy on your bare chest. A warm cloth diaper or blanket is placed on your baby's back. Your top is closed over your baby much like a "kangaroo's" pouch.



### Benefits of Kangaroo Care for your Baby

Provides comfort to your baby. (The warmth of your skin, the love of your touch, and your smell all comfort your baby). Your steady heartbeat and breathing soothes your baby.

Keeps your baby's temperature normal. Your body adjusts to keep the baby's temperature at the right level.

Improves oxygen levels and regulates your baby's heart rate and breathing.

More rapid weight gain.

Decreases crying and regulates sleep/wake cycles.

More successful breastfeeding.

Earlier hospital discharge

### Benefits of Kangaroo Care for You

Increases bonding between you and your baby. It helps you feel connected to your growing little one.

It stimulates breast milk production. (Pumping breasts soon after kangaroo care increases your supply.)

Increases confidence in your ability to care for your baby.

It is a wonderful way to feel close to your baby. You will be comforted to feel your baby's closeness and the complete relaxation of his or her little body next to yours.

You will find satisfaction in doing something for your baby that only parents can do.

*"I feel like I can really relax now. He's really ours."* - NICU parent after kangaroo care for the first time.



*"Having skin-to-skin contact was heaven. It felt very natural."* - NICU parent.

