

Your Health Education

Skin-to-Skin (Kangaroo) Care

Skin-to-skin care, also called kangaroo care, is a method of holding a baby so that there is skin-to-skin contact between the baby and the person holding the baby. Skin-to-skin care has been proven to help the baby thrive in his or her new atmosphere. We encourage you to perform skin-to-skin care with your baby and would be happy to assist you in this special bonding experience.

Here are some potential benefits of skin-to-skin care:

- The baby spends more time in quiet sleep and may be less irritable or fussy.
- Heart rate and breathing rate normalizes, and drops in heart rate or periods of apnea may decrease.
- Helps you to recognize your baby's hunger signs (sucking sounds, licking lips, waking up, hand-to-mouth motions).
- Body temperature is maintained, which helps the baby to conserve energy.
- Mothers may experience an increase in breast milk supply.
- Increases rates of successful breastfeeding.
- Enhances parent-baby bonding and increases parental confidence.

To prepare for skin-to-skin care, mothers or fathers should:

- Remove your shirt and/or bra or open a buttoned shirt and replace it with a patient gown that the nurse gives to you.
- Remove all of your baby's clothes except for his or her hat and diaper.
- Your baby will be placed vertically on your chest with a blanket placed over both of you.
- Relax, let your baby rest, and enjoy this unique bonding experience.

If your baby is receiving care in the NICU, any baby identified by the NICU care team as medically stable is able to take part in skin-to-skin care. If you would like to start skin-to-skin care with your baby, please ask your baby's nurse for assistance.

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