

Skin-to-Skin Care

Skin-to-skin, or ‘kangaroo’ care, involves holding your baby against your bare chest to provide extra warmth and promote bonding. (It has long been known that small babies can’t maintain their temperature well.) This method benefits both baby and the parents. Even in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU), skin-to-skin care benefits and can be practiced by both mothers and fathers. Being close to you will help your newborn adjust to being born and make him/her feel safe and secure. If you have chosen to breastfeed, it is important for you and your baby to get started as soon as possible after birth. Being skin-to-skin with you gives the baby the best chance to make that happen.



Skin-to-skin Care in the NICU

When your baby can be safely moved, your nurse will help you get ready for skin-to-skin care by giving you a reclining chair and warm blankets to cover you and your baby. Your nurse will also assist you with transferring your baby to and from the bed to your chest. We recommend that a parent kangaroo for at least one hour at a time so that the baby isn't awakened shortly after being moved and can fall into a deep and restful sleep.

Kangaroo care may help your baby to:

- Gain weight
- Stay warm
- Increase periods of deep sleep
- Improve ability to breastfeed
- Regulate their heart rate and breathing

Kangaroo care may help you to:

- Increase your milk supply
- Bond with your baby
- Reduce stress