

## The Benefits and Practice of Kangaroo Care for Newborns



### Highlights

Kangaroo care is when you hold your newborn baby against your bare chest, also known as skin-to-skin care.

It supports bonding, breastfeeding, and emotional and physical development.

Both parents and babies can benefit from kangaroo care.

Kangaroo care can be used in hospital settings or at home, including for babies who are unwell or in the NICU.

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### What is Kangaroo Care?

Kangaroo care refers to holding your baby against your bare chest. This skin-to-skin contact helps regulate the baby's temperature and creates a comforting bond between parent and child. It's safe for full-term babies, as well as premature babies or those requiring medical care.

### **When Should Kangaroo Care Be Used?**

Kangaroo care is encouraged immediately after birth if both the baby and mother are healthy.

It is beneficial for babies in NICU or SCN settings, even those who need respiratory support.

Health professionals recommend starting kangaroo care as soon as possible and practicing it frequently, even as the baby grows.

### **Benefits of Kangaroo Care for Babies**

Kangaroo care provides several benefits:

Helps regulate heart rate, breathing, and oxygen levels

Reduces the risk of infection

Aids in weight gain and maintaining body temperature

Encourages calm sleep and brain development

Supports breastfeeding efforts

### **Can Kangaroo Care Help with Pain Relief in Babies?**

Yes, kangaroo care can help soothe babies during medical procedures such as vaccinations. The skin-to-skin contact reduces stress for both the baby and the parents.

### **How Parents Benefit from Kangaroo Care**

Kangaroo care also offers several advantages for parents:

Fosters emotional bonding and attachment

Boosts confidence in handling and caring for your baby

Supports breastfeeding and milk production

Reduces stress and promotes relaxation

## **Preparing for Kangaroo Care**

Here are some tips to prepare:

Wear a shirt that opens easily, or a front-opening hospital gown.

Remove any undergarments to provide easier access for breastfeeding.

Use pillows for support, and have a blanket ready for your baby.

Avoid perfumes or strong scents that may overwhelm your baby.

Sit comfortably in a supportive chair and ensure you have drinks and other essentials nearby.

Speak gently to your baby and pay attention to their cues.

## **Kangaroo Care for Babies in the NICU or SCN**

In NICU or SCN settings, staff will help facilitate kangaroo care if your baby is stable. Ensure your baby is ready and check with staff before transferring them from the incubator.

## **Tools and Assistance**

**Healthcare Providers:** Speak with your doctor or midwife for advice on kangaroo care, especially if your baby is premature or in the NICU. They can help guide you on when and how to start kangaroo care safely.

**Nurses and Caregivers:** NICU or SCN staff will provide support for kangaroo care and can assist you in ensuring your baby's safety while handling medical equipment like oxygen or monitoring devices.

**Support Groups:** Consider joining local or online parenting groups or forums where you can talk to other parents who have practiced kangaroo care. They can offer support, advice, and shared experiences.

**Comfort Measures:** If kangaroo care is done in the NICU or at home, ask for pillows, blankets, or assistance from staff to ensure your comfort while holding your baby.

**Breastfeeding Support:** Kangaroo care often aids in breastfeeding, so lactation consultants can be an invaluable resource in providing advice and techniques to support your breastfeeding journey.