



Kangaroo Mother Care in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



What is Kangaroo Mother Care?

Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is the practice of holding your baby “skin-to-skin” on your bare chest. Your baby will be on your chest and secured in an upright position wearing only a diaper.

KMC care should ideally start at birth or as soon as possible and can be provided continuously, day and night.

Research has shown KMC contact between babies and their parents is essential to newborn well-being. This is especially true for premature babies.

Kangaroo Mother Care for your Baby

You are an important part of your baby's care and treatment during his or her stay in the NICU. Plan to spend as much time with your baby as possible. Your physical contact with your baby is an important part of your baby's treatment. It is most beneficial for your baby to receive KMC to complete at least one sleep-wake cycle which is usually 60 minutes.

KMC is a wonderful place for your baby to receive care. Your baby's nurses, doctors, and respiratory therapists will be able to do most routine tasks during KMC.

More and more NICUs throughout the world are providing the majority of care to babies while in KMC instead of incubator.

KMC provides physical, emotional, and social closeness that cannot be replaced by an incubator.

KMC benefits your baby by:

- Regulating body temperature;
- Stabilizing heart and breathing rates;
- Improving weight gain;
- Decreasing feelings of stress;
- Decreasing crying;
- Increasing sleep time;
- Improving brain development;
- Protecting against infection;
- Getting ready for breastfeeding.

KMC benefits you by:

- Enhancing bonding and preventing feelings of separation;
- Increasing your confidence in providing care for your baby;
- Improving your milk supply;
- Increasing your ability to understand and respond to your baby's feeding cues;
- Increasing breastfeeding success;
- Lowering the chance of post partum depression and/ or anxiety.

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Who can do Kangaroo Mother Care?

Mothers, fathers, partners and siblings can provide KMC.

When can I provide Kangaroo Mother Care?

Anytime! We will help you and your baby to do KMC as much as possible— any time of the day or night.

If I can't be at the NICU all the time, how can I practice Kangaroo Mother Care?

Talk to your baby's nurse to help plan what will work best for you. We understand that you are doing the best you can. Here are some tips to help:

1. Get help from your family and friends so you can spend as much time as possible with your baby.
2. Tell your nurse when you will be at the NICU so a plan for the day can be made.
3. In order to practice KMC for long periods of time, plan to:
 - Eat well before KMC;
 - Use the washroom before;
 - Bring a water bottle;
 - Bring any medications;
 - Bring a book to read to your baby;
 - Bring a book or music for yourself.
4. Talk to your healthcare team if you would like others to do Kangaroo Mother Care such as a close family member.

Are there times when I cannot do Kangaroo Mother Care?

There may be times, especially in the first days of life when it may not be possible for you to give continuous KMC to your baby. Your baby's doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists will talk to you about the reason and will help you plan when you can do KMC.



Kangaroo Mother Care at BC Women's

While doing KMC with your baby, you will become more familiar with your baby and your baby's care.

You are a very important part of your baby's care and treatment. Giving KMC to your baby is a key to preparing for discharge home. The benefits of KMC will continue after discharge from the NICU.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care team.

Further information can be found at:

- <http://www.kangaroomothercare.com/>
- Baby Friendly Initiative: Breastfeeding Committee for Canada
- BC Women's Mother and Baby Togetherness Position Hospital Statement
- La Leche League Canada: Kangaroo Care
- WHO: Kangaroo Mother Care – A Practical Guide
- March of Dimes – Kangaroo Care