

Kangaroo Care

Information for consumers

What is Kangaroo Care?

Care for a baby where the baby is held in skin to skin contact with a parent (usually the mother) in a chest to chest position for as long as possible. Research shows that KC improves growth, feeding, development, comfort, and bonding.

5 Important reasons to do Kangaroo Care with your baby.

1. KC is profoundly comforting to your baby.

Your baby can sense your heartbeat which they are already familiar with, and this helps baby to feel more secure and calm. It promotes total relaxation which improves growth and development.

2. KC sleep is the deepest and most restful.

Your baby sleeps much better when in KC than in the cot or humidicrib. Good quality sleep is important for your baby's brain growth and development.

3. KC promotes successful breastfeeding.

KC improves baby's instincts and ability to breastfeed, increases the mother's milk supply and improves her confidence in her ability to breastfeed.

4. KC promotes strong bonding.

KC is a deeply bonding experience, and it is something parents can do to make an important difference to the health and development of their baby. Kangaroo Care is also great bonding time between dad / partner and baby!

5. KC can get your preterm baby home sooner.

It helps to stabilise your baby's heartrate, breathing, oxygen levels, temperature and digestion. It improves growth and development – that means better weight gains



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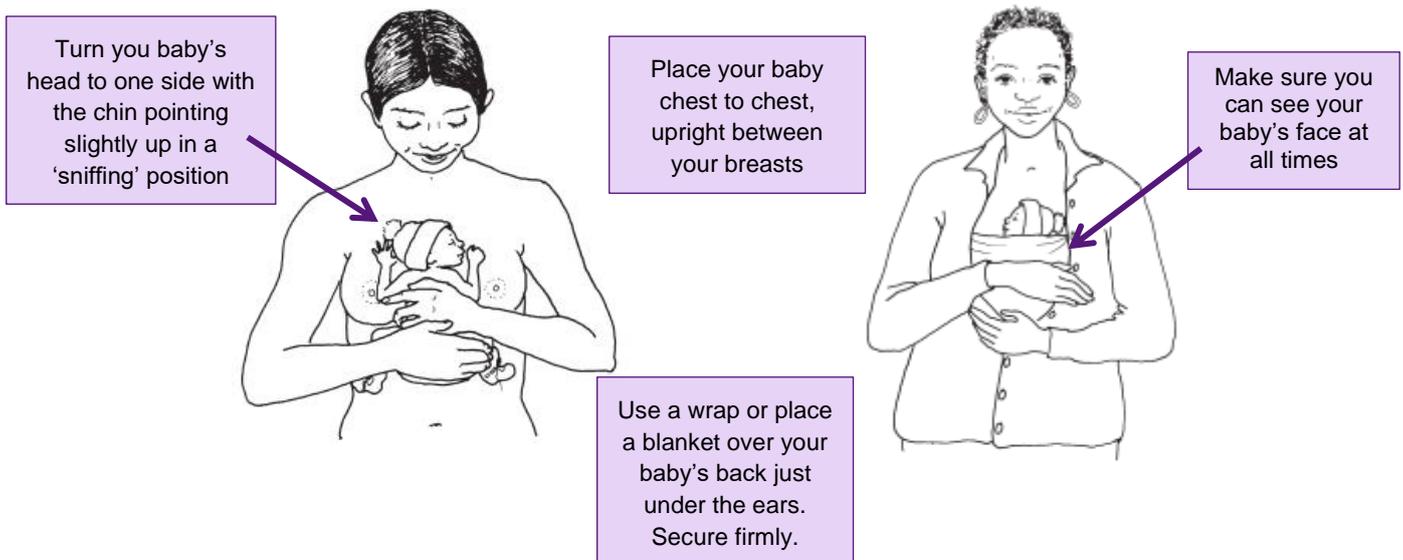
How to do Kangaroo Care?

- The more KC your baby gets the better, but research shows that at least one and a half hours a day can make a real difference. Unless a baby is very unwell, KC can start from birth.
- It is best to do KC for at least one hour at a time as this allows at least one sleep cycle and limits the disruption of undressing, dressing and moving from the cot to KC.
- Aim to be comfortable and enjoy your time with your baby by attending to the following:
 - Go to the toilet beforehand and take your pain medication if needed
 - Use a comfortable chair, have your drink in reach
 - Wear a front opening top or take your top off
 - Put on the tubigrip wrap provided in the nursery or postnatal ward.
- Ask for help to move your baby from the cot/humidicrib and to place baby inside your tubigrip wrap if needed.
- Place your baby in the position as per the picture below. This will keep make sure your baby can breathe easily during KC.
- Avoid noisy and bright electronic devices near your baby to prevent overstimulation.
- Talk, read or sing to your baby, who will be comforted by the sound of your voice.
- Relax and enjoy the closeness, knowing that you are helping your baby's health, growth, and development.

Continuing KC at home.

KC is valuable as your baby grows and develops. We recommend that you buy a commercial baby carrier or wrap that meets Australian Standards for KC after going home. The wraps provided in hospital are not designed for home use and should only be used when sitting down, never when walking around.

Skin to skin contact – how to do it safely



References

Images are reproduced with the permission of the World Health Organization. (2003). Kangaroo mother care: a practical guide. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42587> Fig.4a Positioning the baby for KMC Page 21. Fig. 4b Baby in KMC position Page 22. Fig.6 Father's turn for KMC Page 25