

After

- Leaflet 8** 1. Use the **moving** and **holding/carrying method** used at the start of KC to return your baby to the incubator or crib.
- Leaflet 7** 2. Take the time to tell your baby that KC is over (if tolerated, of course).
- Leaflet 6** 3. Be sure to apply the **soothing methods** for the next few minutes to give your baby time to reorganize and fall asleep slowly/gradually.
- 4. Remove your hands **gradually** so that your baby still feels your touch as he/she relaxes and falls asleep

A set of 11 leaflets

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 The swaddled bath | 5 Swaddling | 9 Positioning |
| 2 Kangaroo care | 6 Soothing Methods | 10 Massage |
| 3 Touch | 7 Holding/carrying | 11 Cue-based feeding |
| 4 Diaper change | 8 Transfers | |



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PARENTING IN THE NEONATAL UNIT

Kangaroo care

Leaflet **2**



Kangaroo care (KC) offers a privileged contact between the parent and the baby. It creates a comforting environment with several elements reminiscent of life in the mother's womb: heartbeat, breathing, familiar smells and voices, etc.

Before

Prepare the environment, if possible, with the help of the nurse:

1. Decrease exposure to **light** (bedside lamp, sun, nearby phototherapy, etc.) and **sound** (voice, etc.).
2. Set the room temperature to be comfortable.

Prepare your baby and yourself

3. Place a **blanket** and a **hat** in the incubator five minutes before KC. If your baby is in a crib, ask about the option of having the blanket and the hat warmed up in the neonatal unit or delivery room.
4. Wash your hands and make sure the skin on your chest is clean and **unscented**.
5. Remove any necklaces to promote optimal contact and protect your baby's fragile skin.
6. Remove your shirt and put on a hospital gown. You can also keep your clothes on and only bare your chest when your baby is placed against you. Moms should take off their bras. As for dads, they should avoid shaving their chest hair (the baby will be able to hold onto it for security!).
7. If your baby is wearing pajamas, take them off. He/she should only be wearing a diaper. During this step, make sure to keep your baby in a foetal tucked-in position (arms and legs bent; hands close to the face) as much as possible. The side lying position will help for this. It is more stressful for the baby to be on his/her back, which creates a lot of extension.
8. Put a hat on your baby.

Kangaroo care

During

- Check with the nurse on how to do the transfer. There are two options: you are given your baby while you are already seated, or you pick him up from the incubator or bed. In the latter case, you will need help moving the equipment at the same time. It is important to respect the swaddle/cradle methods during the transfer.
- Sit comfortably in a chair, a rocking chair, or a zero-gravity chair (if available). It is recommended that you use a chair that can tilt to **60 degrees** so that your baby is better snuggled up against you.
- To make it easier for the **baby to breathe**, place his head on the side, tilted slightly forward or in a neutral position. Cover your baby with a blanket, then the hospital gown or your clothes.
- Enjoy these moments with your baby. Remember that he/she may react following the transfer due to the immaturity of his/her nervous system. If he/she's not showing signs of stress, you can start by talking to him/her in a soft, calm voice. If he/she tolerates this first stimulation well, you can sing him/her a lullaby or stroke him/her. The important thing is to present your baby with one stimulation at a time and to see if he/she is tolerating it.
- Don't hesitate to use **soothing methods** if your baby is showing signs of stress during KC.
- KC usually needs to last a **minimum of 60 minutes** for your baby to reach deep sleep. This phase of sleep is essential: it allows your baby to recover, to grow, to assimilate what he/she has experienced during the day, etc.
- It often happens that milk flows from the mother's breasts during this special time. Have a few washcloths or small cloths handy to wipe it off as needed. Be aware that you can also express your milk while your baby is on you, especially if you provide KC for a long time.
- It is **not recommended that you fall asleep** in a chair with your baby, unless you are using a positioning and carrying tool that is safe to prevent falls, such as the kangaroo tube. Check with the nurse to see if this type of equipment is available at the hospital where you are.