

# Swaddling

Leaflet **5**



Swaddling allows your baby to feel a reassuring touch on his/her body: the blanket surrounds and contains him/her as did the uterus and the amniotic fluid in the mother's womb.

### A set of 11 leaflets

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The content of this leaflet is taken and translated from the book *Être parent à l'unité néonatale: tisser des liens pour la vie* (2017) written by Marie-Josée Martel and Isabelle Milette in collaboration with Audrey Larone Juneau, inf. CHU Sainte-Justine.

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## The main principles of swaddling:

1. The arms and legs are bent and close to the body to reproduce the foetal tucked-in position, which makes your baby feel secure.
2. The hands are close to the mouth, as this position makes it easier for your baby **to calm himself/herself down**.
3. The blanket must allow certain movements: the goal is not to limit your baby's movements, but simply to offer him/her a physical barrier and reassuring contact.

## The two types of swaddling

### Complete swaddling

Your baby's body is completely wrapped in the blanket, except for the head. This type of swaddling may be indicated when you hold your baby, give him a swaddled bath or she/he is undergoing a procedure. Ensure that there is not too much equipment around your baby.

### Partial swaddling

Depending on the care to be provided, your baby's upper or lower body is wrapped in the blanket accordingly. For example, if a heel prick or a diaper change is planned, swaddling the upper body can help your baby stay organized. During sleep, if your baby has small twitches in his/her legs or doesn't have an IV on his/her feet, partial swaddling of the lower body may be soothing for him/her.

Check with the nurse to find out what type of swaddling is right for your baby. If your baby has multiple IVs or more equipment is needed for his/her care, swaddling may not be possible. Rest assured, there are other ways to reassure your baby.

# Swaddling

## How to swaddle your baby

### Before

1. Obtain a neonatal unit blanket or bring a blanket from home if neonatal unit policies allow it.
2. Place the blanket in the incubator for a few minutes to warm it up. If your baby is in a crib, this precaution is not necessary.

### During

- Fold the top of the blanket to form a small triangle. This part will be placed at the level of your baby's neck.
- Using **facilitated tucking/containment method**, put your baby in a foetal tucked-in position and move him/her on to the blanket. Avoid lifting so as **not to create stress**.
- Place your baby's hands close to his/her face with arms bent, and fold one side of the blanket over him/her, securing it lightly under him/her. In this position, the blanket covers your baby's hands. If you are worried that your baby will pull on a tube placed in his/her mouth or nose, you can put small mittens on him/her.
- Fold the bottom of the blanket over your baby's body.
- Fold the other side of the blanket over him/her.

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### After

1. Take the time to tell your baby that the swaddling is finished (if tolerated, of course).
2. Be sure to apply **soothing methods** for the next few minutes to allow your baby time to reorganize and fall asleep slowly/gradually.
3. Remove your hands **gradually** so that your baby still feels your touch as he/she relaxes and falls asleep.

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