



Mercy Health
Care first

Your important health information

Developmental care for your baby

Skin to skin/Kangaroo care

Kangaroo care is a way of holding your baby against your skin.

Your baby is undressed wearing only a nappy and placed against your bare chest. A warm blanket can be placed over you both.

Your baby is able to enjoy kangaroo care when medically stable and can be moved to and from the cot.



Benefits for your baby

Kangaroo care will help your baby to regulate their heart rate and breathing.

Your baby:

- will stay warm when held close against your body
- will sleep more deeply which helps your baby to grow and develop
- feels safe and secure cuddled close to you listening to your heartbeat
- starts to learn about feeding at the breast earlier.

Benefits for parents

- Kangaroo care will help you to feel calmer and more relaxed.
- You will gain confidence, as you get to know your baby.
- Your body will make more hormones, which help you to bond with your baby and to increase mother's breastmilk supply.
- Kangaroo care can be continued while your baby is in nurseries and at home.

Your baby's behavioural cues

Your baby will use body language to show you when they are ready for interaction and when they need rest.

Your bonding will be helped by spending time together and learning to understand their cues.

Some signals your baby may use to communicate are listed below.

I am comfortable and ready to interact when:

- my eyes are open
- I am relaxed and settled
- my hands are near my face or held together
- I look towards your face or objects without turning away
- my heart rate and breathing are stable
- my colour is healthy.

I am tired and need rest when:

- I am closing my eyes or turning away
- my body arches
- I have sudden and jerky movements
- I am frowning
- I am yawning
- I am crying
- my skin colour changes
- my heart rate and breathing are irregular
- I am falling asleep.

You can help me by:

- keeping light and sound low around my cot
- avoiding stroking me when you hold or touch me
- helping me keep my arms and legs close to my body using my nest or your hands
- trying not to wake me when I am sleeping
- having a long kangaroo cuddle.

My feeding pathway

Around 26 weeks

I am sleeping and growing. I know when you touch and talk to me. Your expressed breastmilk will give me extra nutrition and protect me from infection.

26 to 30 weeks

My gag reflex is developing. I can make small sucking movements and swallows, but cannot do these things together yet.

I am learning about my hands, fingers and mouth. Kangaroo care each day will be important to me if I am well. I enjoy the taste of breast milk, especially when I am fed and for my mouth care.

30 to 34 weeks

My feeding skills are developing. I enjoy my kangaroo care and early breast contact. I like to practice my early sucking breastfeeding skills. I can suckle and be tube fed at the same time.

34 to 36 weeks

I am showing you my feeding cues and putting my hands to my mouth. I am learning to coordinate my sucking, swallowing and breathing. Although I will tire, I will enjoy more times to breastfeed.

After 36 weeks

Please breastfeed me when you see my feeding cues. I am stronger and learning to suck all my feeds. I can breastfeed more often, with some tube or bottle feeds. My breastfeeds are the ones I remember.

Progress

We will enjoy our feed times and kangaroo care together as I grow and my feeding becomes stronger.

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

Mercy Hospital for Women
Breastfeeding Support Service
Phone: 03 8458 4677

Werribee Mercy Hospital
Breastfeeding Support Service
Phone: 03 8754 3407

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline
Phone: 1 800 686 2 686
<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Mum2Mum (application)
<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/mum2mum>

Maternal & Child Health Line
Phone: 132229

Private Lactation Consultants
www.lcanz.org

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Thank you to the mother and baby.