



## Skin – to – Skin contact / Kangaroo Care in NICU

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Does skin to skin contact/ kangaroo care between a infant in NICU and his/her parents', improve the outcome for the infant and reduce the time spent in hospital?

Kangaroo care – positioning of an infant, naked or just wearing nappies, upright and prone of the bare chest of a parent.

### Kangaroo care decrease the length of time that infants need to remain in NICU

One study found that the use on kangaroo care reduced the hospitalisation period by a whole day.  
Another study found hospitalization was reduced from 13 days to 11 days in infants receiving kangaroo care.

### Kangaroo care improves outcomes for infants in NICU

Infants receiving this care receive greater benefits than those infants who remain in their incubators.

Kangaroo care infants have reduced mortality as well as:

- A greater attachment to their parents
- more stable physiological responses
- better mental and motor development
- better sleep patterns
- higher weight gain and breastfeed better and often for longer
- Low levels of cortisol – the stress hormone
- Reduced morbidity- fewer severe illness and respiratory problem at 6 months of age.

Kangaroo care also benefits parents. They have:

- Reduced anxiety
- Increased bonding
- Lower cortisol and higher oxytocin levels, leading to increased lactation in mothers.



### Nurses need to promote Kangaroo care in NICU

The benefits of kangaroo care are great for both parents and infants. It is important that NICU RNs encourage kangaroo care for their patients.

They need to provide parents with education around the benefits of kangaroo care, as well as education about the surrounding technology, in order to make the process less daunting.

Nurses have the ability to facilitate bonding between infants and parents, leading to great benefits for all involved and it is important that they encourage kangaroo care as often and for as long as possible.

### References

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