



Kangaroo Care: skin to skin contact at birth and beyond

Information for Women



What is 'Kangaroo Care' and what are the benefits?

'Kangaroo Care' involves placing a baby skin to skin against their mother or father's chest. Through this physical contact, babies are kept warm and have a close interaction with their parents. **Research shows that Kangaroo Care helps ALL babies regardless of feeding method:**

- To keep warm
- To create a special bond between mother and father
- Assist brain development
- Parents really enjoy this experience
- If breastfeeding, more likely to succeed.

Kangaroo Care is especially important for premature and small babies. Our own research at Tunbridge Wells found that Kangaroo Care helps small and premature babies from 34 weeks go home earlier.

KangaWraps and KangaWrap Kardis

- No special equipment is required to do Kangaroo Care – just a mother (or partner) and a baby!
- However our research has found that a **KangaWrap** (specially designed wrap) can assist with the correct positioning of the baby, but also allows mother or father to move around with arms and hands free.
- For women who are confined to bed, (for example after a caesarean birth), a **KangaWrapKardi** can be useful for keeping the baby warm and giving a sense of security.
- All women giving birth at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust are now offered the opportunity to borrow a KangaWrap and a KangaWrapKardi whilst in hospital (subject to availability).

Kangaroo Care after an elective caesarean section

Following our research project investigating Kangaroo Care for babies born by a planned caesarean, we are now able to offer most women the opportunity to have immediate skin to skin contact with their baby in the operating theatre.

When you attend on the day please let the midwife or nurse caring for you know that you would like to do this. She will show you how to wear the Kardi under your operation gown and you will be able to keep it until you feel well enough to get out of bed. Please note there may be certain medical conditions when this will not be possible

Are there any risks involved?

- Current advice from the Department of Health is against co-sleeping (sleeping with your baby in your bed or on the sofa) to avoid the risk of the baby overheating and risk of 'cot death'. We therefore advise you not to do Kangaroo Care whilst you are asleep.
- Please avoid having a hot drink or eating hot food whilst the baby is in the Kangawrap or KangaWrap Kardi to avoid the danger of spillage on the baby.
- When using a KangaWrap or KangaWrap Kardi, the baby must be placed in an upright position – other positions could risk suffocation. It may be helpful to remember '**TICKS**' (**T**ight, **I**n view at all times, **C**lose enough to Kiss, **K**eeP chin off the chest, **S**upported back)
- The KangaWrap Kardi is NOT suitable for carrying your baby when you are walking around.
- Kangaroo care should never be performed when lying flat on your back as there have been isolated (rare) reports of babies 'collapsing' in this position. If you are lying down please ensure that you have at least one pillow so your baby is positioned with a slight 'downward' slope, with head up.

Please note that KangaWraps and KangaWrap Kardis are available for use in hospital. They MUST be returned to staff when you are ready to go home.

KangaWraps are also available to purchase on the postnatal ward. **ALL profit goes to charity.**

KangaWraps and KangaWrapKardis are Fair trade products

Information and advice, including details of the Kangaroo care research carried out at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, can be obtained from:

Web: www.kangawrap.co.uk

Further information and advice

Web: www.unicef.org.uk / baby friendly

NHS 111

NHS Choices online

 111

www.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

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