



# Kangaroo care: skin to skin contact at birth and beyond

## Information for women and their families



**Soft organic cotton**

**Cool and lightweight**

**No straps or buckles**

**A safe, practical way to carry**

**Makes breastfeeding easier**

**One size fits all**

This leaflet has been written to help you understand what kangaroo care is and the benefits for you and your baby. Kangaroo care aims to promote kangawraps (a specially designed wrap) and kangawrap kardis (a special cardigan) as a standard method of care for all newborn babies, both premature and full term. However, you do not need to use any equipment to have skin to skin contact with your baby.



## What is kangaroo care?

Kangaroo care is a technique where the baby, usually preterm, is held skin to skin with an adult. Through this physical contact, the baby is kept warm and has a close interaction with their parents. Kangaroo care can be used for a full term baby and twins too.

## What are the benefits?

According to Mellis (2016) the benefits of kangaroo care are as follows.

- Helps regulate baby's temperature
- Better weight gain
- Less crying/quieter sleeps
- Shorter hospital stay
- Helps with bonding
- Promotes healthy growth and development
- If breastfeeding, more likely to succeed
- Parents really enjoy this experience.

Research has found that kangaroo care is especially important for premature and small babies. It helps them go home earlier. Depending on your baby's condition, kangaroo care can begin immediately after birth or later.

## Do I have to try kangaroo care?

No. It is your choice if you want to try kangaroo care.

## How long should I use kangaroo care?

Within East Kent Hospitals newborns are encouraged to be kept skin to skin with their mothers or fathers during the first hour after birth until their first feed. Kangaroo care after this is encouraged as often as you would like. The kangawraps are suitable for infants from birth to 15kg (kilograms).

## What are kangawraps?

**Kangawraps** are for women who are mobile and want to walk around whilst undertaking kangaroo care, allowing their hands to be free. It is the most comfortable baby wrap for parents to bond with their baby on the move. It provides plenty of support for the baby's head, back, and hips. The wrap is lightweight and distributes the baby's weight evenly across the adult's body.

## What is a kangawrap kardi?

**Kangawrap kardi** can be used while the mother is confined to the bed, for example after a caesarean section or post epidural anaesthetic. It should **never** be used whilst walking around as it will not support the baby.

## Will I be able to use a kangawrap?

All women giving birth in East Kent Hospitals are now offered the opportunity to try out a kangawrap and a kangawrap kardi whilst in hospital.

## Can I keep my kangawrap?

Please note that wraps and kardi's must be returned back to staff when you are ready to go home. You can purchase your own brand new kangawrap from Folkestone or Kingsgate Ward for a cost of £40.

## Are there any risks to using a kangawrap?

Only wear the wrap in accordance with the directions provided by a member of staff.

Your baby should always be carried in an upright position. **Do not** use the kangawrap to carry your baby horizontally as this could risk suffocation.

Position your baby so that you can see its face and check your baby is breathing regularly, especially when your baby is asleep. **Do not** go to sleep with your baby in the wrap.

## Further information

Further information and advice is available from the following web sites or you can speak with your midwife.

- **Unicef: The Baby Friendly Initiative**  
Web: [www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly](http://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly)
- **Kangawrap**  
Web: [www.kangawrap.co.uk](http://www.kangawrap.co.uk)
- **YouTube: baby friendly caesarean birth**  
Web: [youtu.be/fR-39ITbJOQ](https://youtu.be/fR-39ITbJOQ)

## References

- Mellis, C. Kangaroo Mother Care and neonatal outcomes: A meta-analysis. Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health 2016; 52(5):.579–579

**This leaflet has been produced with and for women and their families**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)