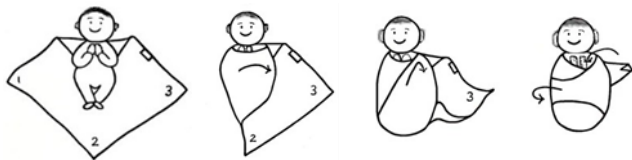


# When to start?

Your baby will be placed on your chest immediately after birth. This may feel a bit wet & cold but your baby will quickly be dried. The nurses will support you to breast feed & leave you & baby together for at least an hour. Then they will move the baby beside you to examine & measure baby before returning baby to your chest.

- ✓ Your baby will stay on your chest when they move you to the post natal ward & should stay there for the whole time you are in hospital.
- ✓ If you need to go to the bathroom, wrap baby tightly in the wrap & leave baby in the middle of your bed. Make sure baby's head is covered



- ✓ When you go home do not dress your baby or wrap in blankets. Your baby must go home on your chest even if you travel by taxi.

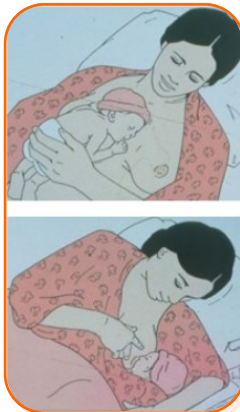
## KMC at home

- ✓ When you are at home try as much as possible to continue with your normal activities.
- ✓ You will need your family to support you to keep breast feeding & to continue with KMC.
- ✓ Make sure that baby's father also gives KMC!
- ✓ Its really important that you visit the clinic regularly to check your & your baby's health & get immunizations.

## When to stop?

Your baby will let you know when baby has had enough. Baby will start trying to crawl out the wrap. Well done! You have given your baby the best start in life!

Acknowledgment: Every Premie Scale-Family Led Care Guide.



# A life giving Gift!

Dear pregnant mother-

You are the most important person in raising, caring for and protecting your baby. How you act towards your baby will play an important role in your baby's health, growth, education & interaction with others during your baby's whole life. This care towards your baby starts very early, even while you are planning to fall pregnant.

One of the best, early, ways of caring for your baby is to hold your baby Skin-to-Skin after your baby is born. This is especially important if your baby is born too small or too early. It is also called Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC).

This booklet will give you all the information you need to be able to offer this special, life giving, gift to your baby.



## What is skin-to-skin care?



Skin-to-Skin Care or KMC, is a special way of tying your baby skin-to-skin against your chest using a cloth or wrap. The baby is dressed only in a nappy and cap and is only fed your breastmilk.

KMC fist started in the 1970s in Bogotá, Colombia, South America, but is now practiced around the world.

A lot of research has been done that proves that KMC is the best way of caring for all babies in the first few weeks of life. It is particularly important that small babies & those that are born too soon (premature) are cared for in this way. It is better than being cared for in incubators.

## How should you prepare?

- ✓ At your 2<sup>nd</sup> antenatal clinic visit it is a good idea to bring your baby's father & your mother so that the nurses can teach you all together about KMC & breastfeeding. Your family needs to understand the importance of these in order to support you once baby is born.
- ✓ It is best to choose someone (a birth companion) to be with you when you deliver-to support you and keep you calm & help you with KMC & breast feeding.
- ✓ You need to make a KMC wrap & cap for you to use once your baby is born. Do this as soon as possible in case your baby is born early.

# Why is KMC good for your baby?

KMC helps your baby now and the effects last until your baby is an adult.

- ✓ Your baby has a better chance of living.
- ✓ Your body heat keeps your baby at the perfect temperature.
- ✓ Your baby's heart beat & breathing are regular & stable.
- ✓ Your baby is protected from infections by receiving protective bacteria from your skin & breast milk. Your breast milk has antibodies against many dangerous bacteria that protects your baby against these infections.
- ✓ Breast feeding is easier- your baby is able to smell & find your breast more easily. Your breast milk keeps baby healthy & helps your baby grow & develop well. It also protects your baby from developing allergies.
- ✓ A love hormone (oxytocin) is released in your baby during KMC which makes your baby feel calm & safe. Your baby cries less & experiences less pain from procedures.
- ✓ Your baby sleeps more deeply & is less likely to wake up. This helps your baby's brain to grow & develop correctly. It also helps you sleep!
- ✓ Your baby grows quickly which means you can go home earlier if your baby is small. At home your baby will be stronger and less likely to get sick.
- ✓ When children who received KMC grow older they behave better, they are better at expressing their feelings, are less angry, hyperactive and less likely to get into trouble. They are more likely to do well at school & work. Research has shown that babies who received KMC are more likely to earn more than babies who didn't.

# KMC is good for you too!

- ✓ **Communication**-As your baby is really close to you all the time you can watch your baby & learn how your baby 'talks' to you. You will learn to know when he is hungry, has a dirty nappy or wants to sleep even before your baby cries.
- ✓ **Confidence**-As you better understand your baby you will feel less anxious & your confidence will increase. You will feel better equipped to care for your baby.
- ✓ **Mental health**-Oxytocin is also released in you. This helps you cope better with stress & feel happier & increases your feelings of love for your baby (bonding).
- ✓ **Physical health**-This hormone also helps you recover from the delivery. It reduces bleeding & pain & helps your blood pressure.
- ✓ **Breast milk**-The amount of breast milk you produce increases during KMC.
- ✓ **Relationship**-It is also important for Dads to practice KMC as it also increases their feelings of love for their baby. When parents support each other to do KMC they are more likely to stay together & have a happier home.

# Different wrap ideas.

- ✓ There are many kinds of KMC wrap. You can choose whichever is easiest for you.
- ✓ It is important that the wrap is strong enough to hold your baby's head in the correct position.
- ✓ The best fabric is cotton or flannel that doesn't stretch.
- ✓ The easiest (particularly if you can't sew) is just using a long piece of cloth (like a sari or cotton wrap) It should be long enough so that you can wrap it around you & your baby & tie in the front. About 2-3m.
- ✓ If you can sew, you can buy a receiving blanket or a piece of flannel (60cm x 60cm) & sew a 3m long strap along the top.
- ✓ Please put the wrap and baby cap in a clean plastic bag and bring it to hospital when you come to deliver.



# How do you do KMC?

- ✓ You need to be bare chested (without a bra), or have a top that opens at the front. Your baby is only dressed in a nappy & a cap.
- ✓ Place baby on your chest in an upright position between your breasts with baby's arms & legs tucked between your baby's body and your chest.
- ✓ Slightly tilt baby's chin up so baby is looking at you & can breathe easily.
- ✓ Tightly tie your baby onto you using your wrap. The edge of the wrap should cover baby's ear without covering baby's face. Bring the ends of the wrap/ties around your back & tie them tightly in the front underneath your baby's bottom.
- ✓ Placing your baby skin-to-skin on your back does not give the same benefit as when they are on your chest.
- ✓ You can put your top/jacket on or cover both you & the baby with a blanket if it's cold.
- ✓ Your baby needs to stay against your chest the whole day including when you sleep. You only take your baby out of this position for feeds or when you wash yourself.
- ✓ You should move around & not stay in bed while your baby is in this position. The movement stimulates the baby to develop faster & better.

