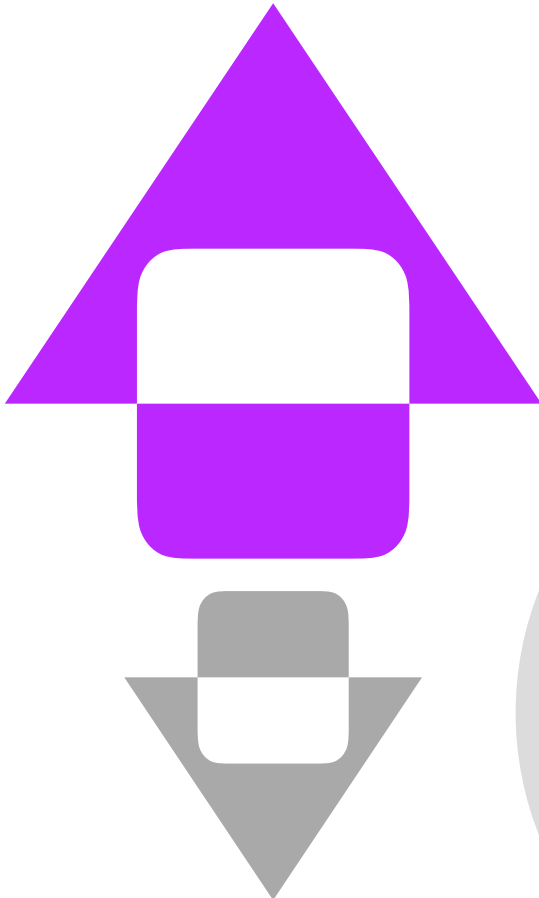


Importance of Skin-to-Skin Holding

Infants in the NICU who engage in Skin-to-Skin contact have been shown to go **home** sooner.



When an infant is placed in an isolette, they are exposed to bacteria different from their own mother's. When the mother holds her infant Skin-to-Skin, the mother is then exposed to that bacteria too. She begins to produce antibodies, which can be found in her breast milk, which will help **protect** her baby.

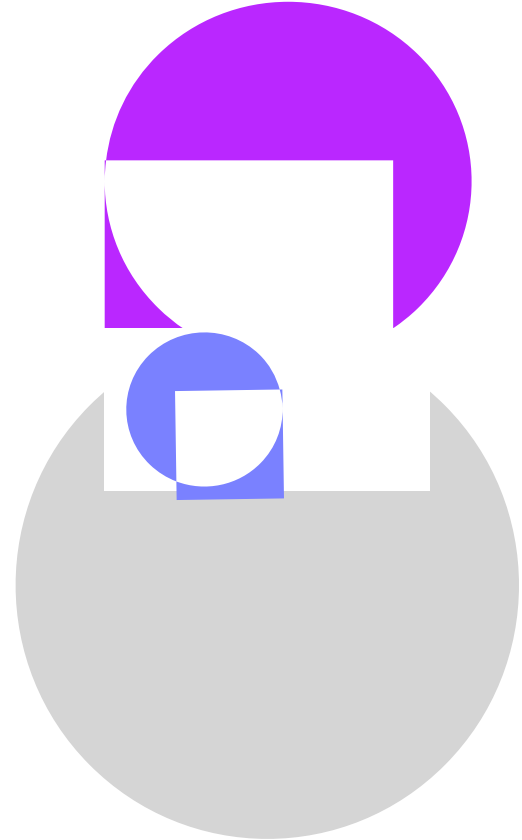
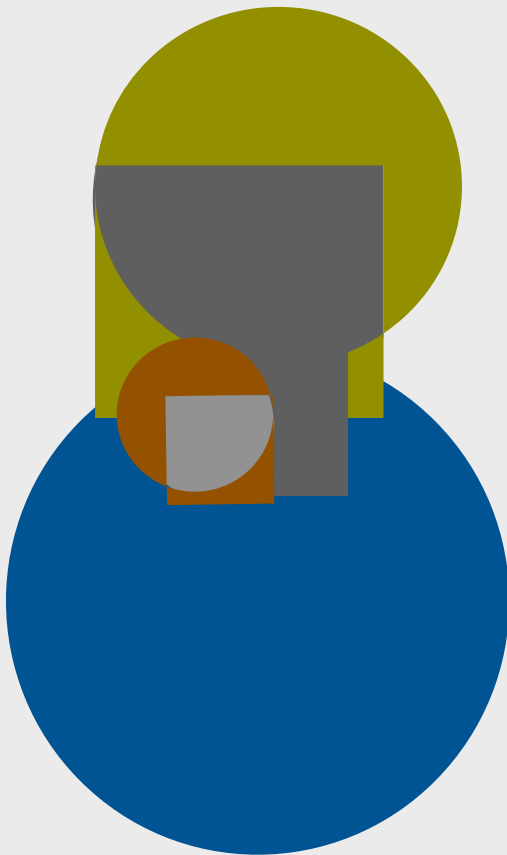
Infants who are placed Skin-to-Skin with their mother or father become more **relaxed** and less agitated; their temperature, heart, and respiration rates stabilize. This positive change in your baby may be seen on the monitor.

Fathers can do it too!

Your baby will feel **soothed** by: the warmth of your body, your smell, feeling the gentle rise and fall of your chest, and hearing your heartbeat and your quiet voice.

Kangaroo Care

- **Ask your nurse** when your baby is ready to be held skin-to-skin.
- During skin-to-skin, your nurse will bring your baby out to you in just their diaper and lay them on your bare chest. Your nurse will show you how to hold your baby.
- The majority of the time, babies **sleep** when they are held this way.
- Plan to spend at least 30 minutes holding skin-to-skin. Your baby may get unsettled during the transfer from the bed to your arms, but **they will rest well** once they settle into your arms.
- Your nurse will tell you when it is time to put them back in bed.



We recognize that you may be nervous holding your baby when they are hooked up to various tubes and wires.

Rest assured that the nurses in the NICU have lots of **experience** helping parents hold their babies.

Please feel welcome to **ask regularly** if it is okay to hold your baby.

Remember to try holding your baby skin-to-skin **in the NICU** and **also at home**. It is an important way to help your baby's development in the NICU and once they are home as well.

Dads can do it too!

Containing Touch

What:

This is touch that provides **still** and **firm** boundaries, as if you are recreating the boundaries of the womb, or the warm containment of a soft blanket.

When:

Try providing Containing Touch at a time when you may not be able to hold your baby.

How:

When your baby is on their **tummy**:

Place one hand on top of your baby's head

and place your other hand on their bottom.

When your baby is on their **back**:

Place one hand on top of your baby's head

and place your other hand under baby's feet **or** on top of baby's chest.

- Guide your hands inwards, as if bringing your palms together
- Use gentle but **firm** and **still** touch instead of stroking.

