**The IMPORTANCE of BREASTFEEDING**

### Kangaroo Care

Kangaroo care is valuable for all families regardless of birthing and feeding method.

**Kangaroo Care**

- **Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)** - was originally defined as continuous and prolonged skin-to-skin contact (SSC/STS) between the mother (or substitute) and the infant, initiated at birth and continued at home after early discharge, with exclusive breastfeeding and adequate support and follow-up. (15)
- **KMC** was proposed as an alternative to conventional neonatal care for low birthweight infants in resource limited countries. (1,2,3)
- **KMC** has been adapted around the world to meet the distinct needs of diversified settings and populations.

**Kangaroo Care (KC) modifications include:**
- Customized KC sessions (timing of initiation, duration and number per day),
- Feeding choices (non-exclusive breastfeeding, gavage feeding),
- Newborn clothing options (dressed or undressed), and discharge criteria. (1,2,6,20)

### Benefits

- Influences breastmilk antibodies
- Assists with cardiorespiratory and temperature stability
- Improves neurodevelopmental outcomes
- Decreases newborn sepsis
- Facilitates infant’s adaptation to non-sterile environment post delivery
- Stabilizes blood sugar
- Encourages sleep organization and duration of quiet sleep
- Decreases hospital readmission rates
- Assists with pain modulation
- Increases weight gain, growth in length
- Increases rates of breastfeeding/breastmilk provision
- Enhances mothering behaviours
- Increases paternal closeness and confidence when caring for infant
- Empowers parents caring for premature/unwell infants. (4,10,12,16)

### Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding regarding benefits and bonding</td>
<td>Lack of acceptance of KMC or belief in the benefits</td>
<td>Lack of uniform knowledge and protocols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time commitment required</td>
<td>Lack of education</td>
<td>Lack of suitable environments - (beds, wraps, chairs and private spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of social support/financial assistance</td>
<td>Time /staffing constraints</td>
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<td>Cultural expectations/gender roles</td>
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### Safety

- Kangaroo Care is safe, natural, effective, and a low-cost intervention that can be utilized in any setting. (1,3,6,12)
- KMC has been recommended by Lancet and WHO as a way to improve preterm birth outcomes. (21)

2018

References on reverse
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Kangaroo Care References


