



## Kangaroo Care

Kangaroo Care originated in Bogota, Columbia where there were insufficient numbers of isolettes available. Premature and sick babies were cuddled up on their mother's chests and covered to keep them warm. Doctors from more developed countries were surprised at how well the babies thrived in these circumstances and some moved to introduce Kangaroo Care to their hospitals.

Studies have shown that babies who are "kangarooed" often have higher levels of oxygen saturation, more stable temperature, are more settled, gain weight faster and go home sooner.

Some hospitals prefer that babies are off the ventilator before Kangaroo Care begins, but others allow it even while the baby needs assistance to breathe. Other hospitals may have minimum weight requirements.

To Kangaroo Care your baby, you will need either a shirt that opens at the front, or a hospital gown, or to take off your t-shirt; mothers should remove their bra as well. The baby is stripped down to his/her nappy only and then cuddled to your chest and covered with a blanket or bunny rug, often they will need to wear a hat too. Both mothers and

**Kangaroo Care can be a great way for Dads to bond with their babies.**

fathers can Kangaroo Care their baby. Kangaroo Care can be a great way for Dads to bond with their babies and some babies take their first licks of milk from their mother this way.

Be guided by the nurses and doctors as to whether your baby is ready for Kangaroo Care. If you are interested and the opportunity hasn't been offered to you, ASK! It may be that

your baby is not stable or well enough yet, or it may just be that the nurses have been busy and hadn't had the chance to offer you the opportunity yet.

You may find that you are able to kangaroo your baby some days and not others. It will depend on how your baby is doing and sometimes on how busy the nursery is and whether there is someone available to help you get set up. Try not to feel disappointed when you can't kangaroo, and enjoy your kangaroo sessions when you do have them.

For more information about Kangaroo Care, check out the Further Reading section on page 6 of this issue of Austprem Ink, or log onto the Austprem Discussion Forum ([www.austprem.org.au/forums](http://www.austprem.org.au/forums)) and ask some of the other parents there about their experiences. You can also read a parent story on page 4 of this issue.

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## From the Editor

Welcome to our first edition of Austprem Ink. We hope that you enjoy reading our newsletter as much as we have enjoyed putting it together for you. Each edition of Austprem Ink will have a topic that we will endeavour to carry throughout the entire newsletter, from In the NICU through to our older children's section, although this may not be possible all the time. In each edition we will include

literature and journal reviews, updates from our other Austprem groups, a reading list with books and web links and a report from the committee. In addition to this we will also include a member's story that is relevant to the topic being discussed. So keep an eye on the What's Coming Section and if you have a story that is relevant to one of our topics (or even if it's not, but you have a story that you want to

share) please write and let us know. We love to hear from you and see some pictures as well. As our newsletter is still in its infancy stage please feel free to let us know if you would like to see something that is not appearing here. We welcome all comments to:

[newsletter@austprem.org.au](mailto:newsletter@austprem.org.au)



## From the President

Touch is an essential part of our relationships. When we become pregnant one of our most urgent desires is to hold and cuddle our child. When a baby is born prematurely it is not always possible for a parent to hold or even touch their child for days and in some cases even weeks. I can remember counting the days until my baby was stable enough to be moved from the open warmer bed to an isolette, so that I could touch him through the portholes on a semi-regular basis. Our cuddles seemed to be few and far between and definitely not often enough to satisfy my craving to be near to my son. There are many ways to touch and hold your baby while in the NICU, many parents find that "cradling" their child when in the

isolette (placing one hand gently on the baby's head with the other cupping the baby's bottom) can often calm a distressed baby and satisfy a parents need for close contact with their child without the need to move the baby from the isolette. Kangaroo Care is another way to cuddle a baby while in the NICU. This is a lovely way to get close to your baby, but do remember that Kangaroo Care is not always suitable for all babies for many different reasons. Try not to be too upset if you cannot share a Kangaroo Care cuddle with your baby and be assured that there are many other ways to hold your child and enjoy close contact in the NICU. Whilst Kangaroo Care can help to soothe smaller babies, children need ongoing touch and cuddles as they grow. Baby massage can be a great way for parents to spend time interacting with their

baby as he or she grows. Toddlers may not stay still long enough for a full massage, but may still enjoy a gentle back rub. Sharing a cuddle while reading, or watching a video, can replace a massage and can become a special quiet time activity. Older children may be more tolerant of this type of touch than public cuddles! In this edition of Austprem Ink we will be talking briefly about touch through Kangaroo Care and Baby Massage and our section for older children will give you tips and hints on how to maintain that close contact without causing any undue embarrassment....enjoy!!

**Leanne Uwland  
President**

**Mum to James (28 weeker  
now almost 8 years),  
Hannah (36 weeker now 5 years)  
and Connor (FT now 8 months)**

leanne@austprem.org.au

## Touch for Older Children

As children get older, you will probably find that they are less interested in cuddles and you may need to work some into your routines.

A before sleep cuddle is fairly easy to incorporate, other times for cuddles may be:

- sharing a story together
- watching tv or a video
- an early morning snuggle

You can touch your child in various ways throughout the day:

- a reassuring pat on the shoulder
- an impromptu back rub
- a kiss on the cheek
- a squeeze of a hand

**you may need to work  
some cuddles into your  
routines**

Leanne touching James (28 weeker)  
for the first time



## Australian TTTS Support Group

The Australian Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome Support Group is a group of parents who have experienced a pregnancy affected by TTTS along with friends and other interested parties. It was established in July 2002 with the aim of assisting parents who were experiencing TTTS as well as educating the public about the condition.

This support group is a non-profit organisation and everyone involved in it is a volunteer.

The Aims of Australian TTTS Support Group are to provide:

- hope to parents experiencing TTTS
- information about the condition to the medical profession and to the community
- information about the current treatment options available within Australia
- support and to share information for those families and friends who have experienced TTTS

- funds towards treatment facilities as well as research into the condition, through donations and fund raising activities

### How to Contact Us:

Email:

[info@twin-twin.org](mailto:info@twin-twin.org)

Website:

<http://www.twin-twin.org>

# Austprem—Pregnancy Support Group

The Austprem – Pregnancy Support Group has been set up for those who are contemplating or experiencing a pregnancy following a preterm birth, and for those at risk of giving birth prematurely.

Whilst many pregnant mothers feel a little apprehensive, mothers who have previously delivered a premature baby, or who have been told they are at risk of doing so, often have concerns about their pregnancy. The Austprem – Pregnancy Support Group is a great group of people who understand what you are feeling. We know what it is like to consider another pregnancy, and the group

can support you as you try to make this important decision (we can't make the decision for you though!). For those that do go ahead with a pregnancy, support is provided throughout, celebrating with you as you reach milestones, sharing in your ups and downs and listening to your fears and hopes.

We hope that everyone can go on to deliver healthy full term babies, but we know that this isn't always going to happen. The Pregnancy Support Group is there to celebrate the birth of your baby, whenever you deliver.

Everyone is welcome to join Austprem – Pregnancy Support Group. You might be pregnant again, you might just be thinking about another pregnancy or you might have already completed a subsequent pregnancy and want to support someone else who is just starting on the journey. Sharing your thoughts and experiences might just help another mother, and support is what Austprem is about.

You can find information about joining Austprem – Pregnancy Support Group at <http://www.austprem.org.au/psg.html>

## Journal Review

### Tactile Stimulation and Preterm Infants

Jen-Juan Liaw

*Journal of Perinatal & Neonatal Nursing*

14 (1) 84-103 June 2000

This article is a literature review, looking at previous research that has been done into touch and preterm infants in the NICU environment. It looks at the components of tactile stimulation including duration, location, action, intensity, frequency and

sensation. These factors are defined and discussed and have previously been studied in both adults and children, but not in preterm infants whose NICU environment can be both sensory deprived (usually for tactile and vestibular senses) and excessively stimulating (especially for auditory and visual senses). The three different types of touch discussed are passive touch, active touch and social touch. All of these are important to the developing preterm infant, with social touch enhancing the social, emotional and physical development.

The article critiques and synthesizes the results of previous studies on touch in the NICU environment and goes on to make suggestions for nursing and for further research. The author suggests that touch is supported by the theory and holds great potential for aiding the development of premature infants, but needs to be studied more thoroughly in order for protocols that provide the best benefit to the infant are followed, and to find the kinds of tactile stimulation that are most appropriate for all concerned.

## Journal Review

### Comparison of skin-to-skin (kangaroo) and traditional care : parenting outcomes and preterm infant development

Ruth Feldman, Arthur I. Eidleman, Lea Sirota and Aron Weller

*Pediatrics*

110(1) p16-26 July 2002

This study set out to examine whether parent-child interactions and infant development were affected by kangaroo care intervention. It compared 73 preterm infants who received kangaroo care with 73 controls who received standard care during their hospital stay.

A number of factors, including mother-infant interaction and maternal depression were examined at 37 weeks gestational age.

The infants looked at again at 3 and 6 months of age, and observations were made on factors such as infant temperament, the home environment and cognitive development.

**“kangaroo care has a significant positive impact”**

The research showed that at 37 weeks gestational age, interactions and touch were more positive, mothers had adapted better to infant cues and infants showed more alertness in the group that had kangaroo care. The mothers also reported less depression. At both 3 and 6 months the mothers and fathers of the children who

received kangaroo care were shown to be more sensitive and the cognitive testing at 6 months showed higher scores for these infants.

The conclusion is drawn that kangaroo care has a positive impact on both perceptual-cognitive and motor development and on the parenting process. Further research is recommended to determine whether the positive impacts continue on into later infancy and childhood. Other developmental care interventions, such as massage therapy and enriched environments, need to be looked at to examine which method or combination of methods provides the most optimal care for the premature infant and their family.

## Angela's Story - Kangaroo Care Experiences

When my daughter was born at 27 weeks in 1992 (*Queen Victoria Hospital, Adelaide*), Kangaroo Care was very new and neither staff nor we were comfortable with it. I was told it would be good for baby and me and my first and only experience of it was in an open space in the nursery, having a scrawny tube-yielding baby placed against my chest & two nurses anxiously fussing. A photo of the event tells the story well – I look more confused than contented. My husband's experience was similar – a tiny baby stuffed in his polo shirt – a great size compassion but both babe and parent looking stunned!

My son James was born at 23 weeks in 1997 at the *Women's & Children's Hospital, Adelaide*. Kangaroo care was better managed – many staff were effusive about its benefits and confident in supporting families to participate.

My first kiss of my baby was day 10 as he was on his way to have PDA surgery – my first cuddle was a skin to skin on day 17. This was a most wonderful experience – aided by a very supportive nurse, a privacy screen and soft music. It was the first time I really felt **I** was his Mum.



Angela with James

The Kangaroo care became a daily very important ritual to both my husband and myself for days 17-47 in NICU and until in SCBU when breastfeeding was established. Even my mother was able to have a snugly skin to skin while James was in NICU! Sometimes the KC went for nearly 2 hours, sometimes 20 minutes - the latter was less satisfying for James and I - the energy he expended in being 'got in & out' I felt required a longer recovery time.



The whole family

I always sang to James the John Lennon song '*Beautiful Boy*'; although the screen was only fabric it allowed the illusion of privacy and a break in my 'public parenting' role. Sometimes my 4 year old daughter would sit at my feet, drawing or playing, at other times I would read a book to her and James.

**"...my first cuddle was a skin to skin on day 17. This was a most wonderful experience"**

I learned quickly which rocking chair was the best and which screen provided the most coverage.

I also learned which staff I needed to stand my ground with and which I could trust to support me to luxuriate in this daily ritual.

I remember clearly the weekend James became really ill – he had a blood infection requiring heavy-duty antibiotics and 3 platelet transfusions. It was very scary. Amanda was the nurse looking after him in NICU and knew how much James enjoyed our cuddles so organised a skin to skin. Within minutes he had burrowed and his stats stabilised. He stayed with me for 2 hours – Amanda was on an afternoon shift followed by a morning and then another morning shift. She firmly believed that James drew strength from me in these lengthy cuddles and so strongly advocated that they continued in spite of his unwell state. James made a complete recovery.

Some staff were less comfortable or confident with the process, being unable to find time to get baby 'out' (too close to lunch), hovered closely in fear or something going wrong and me being unable to tell, or wouldn't dim the lights (had to see if he was turning blue!), etc. but as a second time prem mum I felt clearer about what I wanted (I had done lots of reading between pregnancies) and seeing how settled James was during the cuddles I assertively 'managed' the process.

James still loves his cuddles and likes to have his special song sung to him. My second experience of Kangaroo Care was wonderful and I believe an important element of James' move to wellness. It also effectively supported my transition to being a confident mum of a fragile baby through positive experiences in nurturing.

### Angela Falkenberg

17/4/03

Mum to Elizabeth (27 weeks, now 10) and James (23 weeks, now 6)



Paul kangarooing

# Baby Massage

Baby Massage is a way to spend some quiet time with your baby. Both fathers and mothers can massage their babies, and it can be a special time for fathers who may be unable to take part in feeding to bond with their young child.

**Baby Massage is a way to spend some quiet time with your baby.**

Massage has been shown to have a significant role in promoting growth and development in infants, and has physical benefits such as stimulating nerves, increasing blood flow and strengthening the immune system.

If your baby suffers from colic, a gentle massage may help to relieve some of the discomfort, but check with your doctor or health care provider that there is no underlying medical cause for the discomfort first.

It is best to use an edible vegetable oil, such as olive oil for massage, not a commercial massage oil as much of the oil will be absorbed into the baby's skin, and some will be ingested when the baby puts his hand into his mouth. Rub the oil between your hands to warm it a little before touching your baby. Don't use oil on your baby's face. You will probably need to add more oil to your hands as you go.

A warm room is essential so that your baby is comfortable, it is a good idea to take the phone off the hook, or to turn the ring down as low as possible to prevent interruptions; a sign on the door will let visitors know you are having a quiet time with your baby. A quiet CD or cassette of soothing music may be a nice accompaniment to your

massage session. You may also like to spend the time just talking gently to your baby or singing some rhymes or songs.

Always ask your baby's permission before starting to massage him. Massage him gently, and try to maintain eye contact.

A massage may start with your baby lying naked on his back on a bunny rug or cloth nappy in front of you (it might be worth putting something waterproof underneath!). Start with the legs and feet, working down the leg from the hip to the foot as well as up from the foot to the hip. Long strokes are best. Then move onto the stomach, if you use a circular motion, it is best to move in a clockwise direction, as this is the way that the digestive system works.

Move up to the chest, and then onto the arms and hands. Arms are similar to legs in that long strokes are best, working both up and down the arm.

The face is massaged using no oil, and trying to avoid the cheeks, especially near the mouth (your baby may think he is going to get a feed!). Gently run your hands from brow to temples, and "draw" small circles around the jaw, over the ears and chin.

Then it's time to turn your baby over, and massage his back. This can be very relaxing for him, and some babies may go to sleep. As well as making long strokes down his back, try "drawing" small circles over his back and buttocks.

A massage before your baby's bed or naptime can be a great way to relax him for a good sleep. Some people like to massage their baby after a bath so the baby is already undressed and ready to go. A bath, a massage, a feed and bed works well as a routine for many (sounds good to me!)

Baby Massage is not easy to explain, it is much easier to have someone show you the various techniques involved. Some hospitals offer "short courses" in baby massage which you might like to attend, other possibilities for more information on "how-to" are a book or video from your local library. Your Child Health Nurse may be able to show you what to do and might also have a video or book you could borrow.

You don't have to give your baby a "professional" massage - a gentle all over rub will give you both a little quiet time and a lot of pleasure.

Some babies will take a while to get used to being massaged so you might need to start slowly by just massaging a part of the body (eg legs) to get your baby used to the idea. Gradually increase the area massaged as well as the time you take to give the massage. Watch your baby's cues to see how much he can tolerate. If you find that your baby doesn't seem to like a particular stroke or being touched in a particular area, just leave that bit out. The massage experience should be relaxing and enjoyable.

**The massage experience should be relaxing and enjoyable.**

The bonding experience enjoyed by both baby and parent during a massage is a special one. Regular massages can become a sharing time with an older child, although keeping the massages going through toddlerhood can be difficult. Toddlers used to massage will often stay still enough for a short turn, which can lengthen again as they move into childhood.

Happy Massaging!

**Kirsten Burkitt  
mum to**

**Michael, 31 weeker, now 6 years  
and Rebekah, FT, now 3 years**

[kirsten@austprem.org.au](mailto:kirsten@austprem.org.au)

(Whilst I have referred to the baby as a "he" in this article, it is equally relevant to both boys and girls, just a little unwieldy to type both each time. Please forgive me - I will use "she" next time!)

***"It is through our hands that we speak to the child.***

***That we communicate. Touch is the child's first language.***

***Understanding comes long after feeling"***

**Frederick Leboyer—Obstetrician and Author**

## Further Reading

Always check with your baby's doctor or other healthcare professional as to whether any practice or procedure you read or hear about is appropriate for you and your baby.

If you would like to access a copy of any of the journal articles listed here, or reviewed in the Newsletter, please contact [kirsten@austprem.org.au](mailto:kirsten@austprem.org.au)

## Books:

### **Kangaroo care : the best you can do to help your preterm infant**

Susan Ludington-Hoe

### **Baby massage**

Peter Walker

### **Baby Massage: Parent-Child bonding through touch**

Amelia D. Auckett

### **Infant massage: a handbook for loving parents**

Vimala Schneider McClure

## Chats

Chats are a great way to get to know other members better. They are usually held on Thursdays (9:30pm EST) and Sunday nights from about 9pm (EST).

A reminder is posted to the Austprem Forum the day before a chat, so check there for the exact time. The chats are held in the Austprem Chat Room on the mc2 site, so only Austprem members are able to attend.

**"You can turn up in your pj's and you don't need a babysitter"**

## Austprem Membership

Austprem is an internet based support group, providing support to anyone that needs it.

However, we ask that you consider becoming a financial member of Austprem to help us to provide the services we offer.

Austprem receives no government funding and is run entirely by volunteers.

## Websites:

Listed below are some websites with further information about Kangaroo Care.

[http://www.manitoba.ca/womens\\_health/kangaroo.htm](http://www.manitoba.ca/womens_health/kangaroo.htm)

<http://www.prematurity.org/baby/kangaroo.html>

<http://www.mts.net/~wordsink/kangcare.htm>

[http://breastfeeding.com/all\\_about/all\\_about\\_kangaroo.html](http://breastfeeding.com/all_about/all_about_kangaroo.html)

<http://www.vh.org/pediatric/patient/pediatrics/kanga/index.html>

[http://www2.medsch.wisc.edu/childrenshop/parents\\_of\\_preemies/understanding6.html](http://www2.medsch.wisc.edu/childrenshop/parents_of_preemies/understanding6.html)

<http://www.infantmassage.org.au/>

We are hoping to hold some special topic chats, so if you have a topic you would like to discuss, or know of anybody who could lead such a discussion, please let us know, either via the Forum or direct to [leanne@austprem.org.au](mailto:leanne@austprem.org.au)

Chats are very informal—you can turn up in your pj's (who's going to know?) and you don't need a babysitter. But you can still receive great support and understanding from other parents, or just have a social chat—a bonus if you have been isolated at home all day.

## Journal Articles:

As well as the articles reviewed on pages 2 and 3, you might like to read:

### **A randomized, controlled trial of Kangaroo Mother Care: results of follow-up at 1 year corrected age**

Nathalie Charpak, Juan G. Ruiz-Pelaez, Zita Figueroa de C., Yves Charpak.

*Pediatrics* 108(5) p1072-9 Nov 2001

### **Skin-to-skin contact (kangaroo care) promotes self-regulation in premature infants: sleep-wake cyclicity, arousal modulation, and sustained exploration**

Ruth Feldman, Aron Weller, Lea Sirota, Arthur I. Eidelman

*Developmental Psychology*

38(2) p194-207 March 2002

### **Touch me, I'm yours: the benefits of infant massage**

Sheila Koty Globus

*Special Delivery*

25 (1) p8-9 Spring

### **Infant massage as a component of developmental care: past, present and future..**

Rosalie O. Mainous

*Holistic Nursing Practice*

16 (5) p1-16 Oct 2002



**Your membership  
will help us to  
achieve our goals**

# Birthdays

## May

11th Ben (3)  
19th Samantha and Matthew (8)  
22nd Janarra (7)  
25th Jacob (10)  
26th James (5)  
30th Sarah (3)  
31st Erin (6)

## June

13th James (8)  
15th Jacob (4)  
26th Thaddeus (10)

## July

9th Molly (6)  
20th David and Nicholas (3)  
24th Belinda (1)  
25th Sheldon (4)  
25th Kylara (2)



If you would like your children (full term and prem) added to the Birthdays page at [www.austprem.org.au/superheroes/birthdays.html](http://www.austprem.org.au/superheroes/birthdays.html) or to be listed in the Newsletter, please email [kirsten@austprem.org.au](mailto:kirsten@austprem.org.au)

## Austprem Inc.—Application for Membership

You will need send this form to the address below with your cheque/money order.  
A receipt will be posted to you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

I am applying to join Austprem Inc. and agree to abide by the  
Rules and Guidelines of the Association  
Membership cost per year \$20

I would like to make a donation to Austprem of  
(donations \$2 and over are tax deductible)  
\$20 \$50 \$100 \$other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Total \$\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your cheque/money order out to Austprem Inc. and forward it with this form to:  
Austprem Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 2157, Sunbury Vic 3429

### Baby's details (New members please complete)

Baby's name \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Gestation \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names \_\_\_\_\_



ABN 67 731 996 316

### Austprem Inc.

Supporting families and caregivers of premature babies and children

Visit our website  
[www.austprem.org.au](http://www.austprem.org.au)

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Please support those that support us.

## Coming Up in the Next Issue...

### Sensory Integration Disorder

- What is it?
- Why have I been told that there is no such thing?
- Who can help?
- Where do I go for more info?

### Developmental Care in the NICU

As well as regular features such as Journal Reviews, Your Story, Further Reading, Birthdays and more!

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PremiePress is a publication for those who are interested in the development of premature infants and prematurely born children.

The first edition may be viewed online at <http://www.premiepress.com/>

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## Disclaimer

Please note that Austprem Inc. does not recommend that any interventions are made to any baby or child without the knowledge and assent of the child's doctor or other health care provider.

Austprem Inc. cannot be held liable for the actions of any person based on information that Austprem Inc. has provided.

Please check with your doctor or health care provider as to what interventions are appropriate for YOUR baby.