

When can my baby start Kangaroo Care?

As soon as your baby is stable after birth, you can start with Kangaroo Care. This basically means once the baby can breathe on its own and is no longer on drip. The smallest baby we have had so far weighed only 580 grams and was born at 26 weeks. The NICU staff will work with you to decide on the appropriate times for your Kangaroo Care visits.

How often and long should Kangaroo Care be done?

At Mount Alvernia Hospital, we advise our patients to commit to at least one hour a day of Kangaroo Care and to continue for as long as both mother and child are comfortable. It can last up to 3 hours each time as that coincides with the baby's feeding times (every 3 hours).

Are only mothers involved in Kangaroo Care? How about fathers?

Both parents can be involved in Kangaroo Care. Whether with the mother or the father, Kangaroo Care creates a special bond between parent and baby.

What happens after Kangaroo Care?

Kangaroo Care often progresses naturally into breastfeeding as the baby is cradled against the breasts and will naturally want to suckle next. When we feel that mother and child are ready, our nurses will help advise the parents that it's time to move on to breastfeeding.

A Parent's Perspective

"We feel that Kangaroo Care has helped us deal with not being able to bring our baby home. Seeing how happy my baby looks during our visits has given us the feeling that we are in some way contributing to his care. One of the saddest things is the helplessness you sometimes feel as parents when your baby is in NICU. The care and well being of your baby is totally out of your control. Being involved with Kangaroo Care allows us to do something positive to help our baby grow in a healthy way". Hyun Sook, Mother

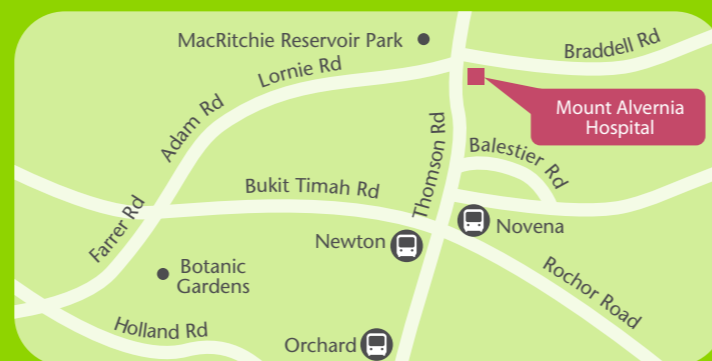


GUIDE TO NICU & KANGAROO CARE



OUR LOCATION

Conveniently located in central Singapore, Mount Alvernia Hospital is only 10 minutes away from the world-famous Orchard Road shopping belt where many hotels are located; and 20 minutes drive from Changi International Airport. If you are coming by subway, there is a free bus service from the Novena MRT Station to the hospital.



*Remember the heart that serves with love.
Remember Mount Alvernia Hospital.*

Mount Alvernia Hospital is a general acute care hospital committed to delivering value-for-money, quality healthcare. Since our founding by Catholic missionaries in 1961, we have evolved with the growing needs of public healthcare and developed multi-disciplinary medical expertise to cater to a wide range of medical conditions. *We Serve All With Love.*

For more information or to inquire about our services, please contact us at:
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*Serve all
with Love*

ABOUT THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU)

Congratulations on your newborn baby! At this moment, we understand your anxiety for your baby and would like to reassure you that he/she will receive the much needed care and attention from all of us. This brochure aims to provide some information about our unit. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to approach any one of our staff or call us at 6347-6370.

Caring for your baby

On admission, your baby is nursed under a radiant warmer to keep warm and for close observation. We have precision equipment to monitor your baby's heartbeat, breathing rate and oxygen intake. Do not be alarmed if you see many wires attached to your baby. These are needed to monitor your baby's progress.

Isolation Room Monitoring

For newborns up to one month old. This refers to outbound cases from home or other hospitals. Charges will be as per NICU criteria depending on the severity of the illness.

Special Care Baby Unit Monitoring

This service is for babies who are not well at birth and need close observation. If they are well after 4 hours of observation, they will be transferred to a normal nursery upon doctor's orders. A flat rate of 4 hours stay will be chargeable.

Infection Control

Mothers are encouraged to visit their babies as soon as they feel well enough to move around, and we encourage parents to visit their baby as often as possible. However there are some simple steps you can take to protect your baby's health:

- Upon entering NICU, please wash your hands (up to the elbow) with liquid soap even if you are not touching your baby.
- Please do not enter the NICU if you have a cold, sore throat, cold sores or recent contact with chicken pox or shingles.



Breastfeeding

We strongly recommend breastfeeding for all babies. Breast milk provides the necessary antibodies to help your baby fight any potential infections. It is also more easily digested by babies. We have a team of lactation consultant nurses to assist you with initiating lactation and expressing breast milk. They can be contacted at 6347-6641.

KANGAROO CARE @ ALVERNIA

Kangaroo Care is the practice of giving babies skin-to-skin contact with their parents, enabling them to share warmth and natural closeness. It was developed in Bogota, Columbia and has been used successfully in South America, Europe and the United States.

As care providers to both you and your baby, the NICU staff is dedicated to meeting your needs as parents. Our Kangaroo Care programme was officially introduced in 2004 and it has been very beneficial for our patients. We believe that Kangaroo Care offers you an opportunity to enhance your parenting role in the often stressful NICU environment. Kangaroo Care has been found to relieve the feeling of separation experienced by some parents with babies in the NICU.

Why Kangaroo Care?

Parents whose premature babies are in the NICU face many barriers that separate them. They are the baby's fragility and acute care needs, the plastic walls of their Incubator, a variety of caretakers and the connection to high technology. Kangaroo Care provides parents with an opportunity to ease the ache of separation and lessen these barriers.

Benefits of Kangaroo Care

- Helps premature babies grow, leave their incubator sooner and achieve deeper, more restful sleep.
- Breastfeeding mothers who practise Kangaroo Care produce more milk.
- Parents who routinely provide this care are more comfortable caring for their babies and have less anxiety when taking them home when they are ready for discharge.

3 Simple Steps to Kangaroo Care

- The mother is advised to wear a loose fitting top. (Preferably clothes with open front)
- She sits in a comfortable chair next to her baby's incubator.
- The baby is dressed in a bonnet and diaper and placed on his/her mother's bare chest for an hour. This is direct skin to skin contact. These visits usually correspond to feeding times (usually one hour before or after feeding) and are offered in a quiet, private room with soothing music in the background. Both mother and father may provide Kangaroo Care.

How will my Baby React?

Your baby's reaction to Kangaroo Care may vary from visit to visit. Once in your arms resting on your chest, your baby may fall asleep or remain awake. NICU staff will help you understand your baby's behaviour and responses. Understanding your baby's behaviour and responses will allow you to experience the benefits from Kangaroo Care.

Is Kangaroo Care for preemies only?

Kangaroo Care is good for any baby as it builds the bond between mother and child, but for preemies, it can be especially helpful to the baby's growth and development. Preemies benefit from weight gain and can sleep better for longer. In fact, many of our mothers were pleasantly surprised to find they could bring their babies home 2 weeks before the expected discharge date. As it shortens the length of hospital stay, Kangaroo Care effectively reduces the cost of healthcare.