



GOOD PRACTICE POINTS: SUPPORTING PARENT/CARERS TO MOVE THEIR BABY IN/OUT OF AN INCUBATOR

Introduction

Positive touch through comfort holding and skin-to-skin care is well documented as an essential part of care for sick or preterm babies and their parents or carers. Benefits include increased physiological stability, reduced stress and decreased pain perception for baby. In addition breast feeding rates and enhanced parent and baby bonding are improved as a result. Positive touch also supports parents' ability to recognise their baby's cues, increases parental confidence and reduces parental anxiety and stress.

It is important that all neonatal staff support parents or carers by providing as many opportunities as possible for comfort holding and skin-to-skin care with their baby and enabling them to move their baby in and out of the incubator safely themselves when appropriate.

Scope of Practice

These good practice points have been produced for use in Neonatal Units across the East Midlands Neonatal Operational Delivery Network (EMNODN) and are intended to be used by neonatal staff. This is to ensure a consistent approach to supporting parents in getting their baby in and out of an incubator for skin to skin care or cuddles.

Good Practice Points

- Skin-to-skin care or cuddles outside the incubator should be encouraged if a baby is stable or receiving palliative care on the neonatal unit.
- Skin to skin or cuddles outside the incubator are not recommended if the baby:
 - Is on High Frequency Ventilation
 - Is on Nitric Oxide Ventilation
 - Has a chest drain in place
 - Has an umbilical arterial catheter in place
 - Has an unrepaired surgical condition such as, gastroschisis,
 - Has very recently had an operation and needs ventilation and medicines for muscle relaxation
- Provide parents/carers with the information leaflets about skin-to-skin care and moving their baby in and out of the incubator.
- Discuss with parents/carers, the appropriate timing for cuddles or skin-to-skin care.
- Ensure parents/carers understand and have received teaching on the process for moving their baby in and out of the incubator. This should include:

- **Before moving baby out of the incubator:**
 - Informing the nurse allocated to their baby that they're moving their baby so that they're available to help if needed
 - Allowing at least 20 minutes after a feed before moving baby
 - Preparing everything for cuddles or skin-to-skin care, such as chair, pillow, blankets
 - Checking their baby's temperature
 - Dressing or undressing their baby as appropriate for cuddles or skin-to-skin care
 - Gently waking their baby so they don't startle them when they start to move them

- **When moving baby out of the incubator:**
 - Opening the side of the incubator
 - How to use the tray to help with moving baby out of the incubator if using a Giraffe incubator
 - Moving baby slowly, supporting their head and bottom
 - Supporting any monitoring wires or feeding tubes, or asking someone else to help with these

- **While baby is out of the incubator:**
 - Positioning their baby and themselves so that they are comfortable and can see baby's face during skin-to-skin care or cuddles
 - Ensuring baby is settled and appropriately wrapped to maintain temperature, depending on whether receiving skin-to-skin care or cuddles
 - Not moving around the neonatal unit carrying their baby to avoid the risk of trips and falls, which could result in injury to them or their baby
 - Closing the incubator sides to maintain the incubator temperature

- **When moving baby back into incubator:**
 - Informing the nurse allocated to their baby that they're moving baby so that they're available to help if needed
 - Opening the side of the incubator
 - How to use the tray to help with moving baby in to the incubator if using a Giraffe incubator
 - Moving baby slowly, supporting their head and bottom
 - Supporting any monitoring wires or feeding tubes, or asking someone else to help with these
 - Settling baby back into the incubator
 - Making sure that the incubator sides are closed securely
 - Taking baby's temperature and dressing them if applicable, for example if they have been undressed for skin-to-skin care
 - Positioning baby appropriately

Auditable Standards

	Auditable Standard	Target
1	There is evidence that parents/carers are encouraged to hold their baby outside of the incubator when baby is stable or receiving palliative care.	100%
2	There is evidence that parents/carers have received information and education to enable them to participate in moving their baby in or out of the incubator which includes all aspects listed in document	100%
3	There is evidence that parents/carers have had the opportunity to hold their baby outside the incubator, as appropriate, on a regular basis.	100%

Ratified: 02 October 2019