

## Let's Talk About...

# The Intermountain Healthcare NICU / SCN Cuddler Program

## What is the NICU / SCN Cuddler Program?

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit's (NICU) Cuddler Program provides vital positive touch for babies in the NICU and Special Care Nurseries (SCN) at Intermountain Healthcare.

## Why is cuddling and touch important?

Research shows that purposeful and positive touch helps a baby's brain and body develop. Touch has been called "the mother of all senses."

For babies, the short-term and long-term benefits of positive touch include:

- Increased stability in:
  - Heart rate
  - Temperature
  - Oxygen levels
- Faster weight gain
- Shorter hospital stays
- Better pain tolerance
- Improved sleep
- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Stronger immune systems
- Healthier brain development
- Increased social skills (better mother and infant interactions)
- Improved language skills



## Who cuddles my baby?

**You, your touch as the parent provides the essential and preferred touch for your baby.** We understand that you are going through a healing process; you have family, work, and other obligations and aren't always able to be with your baby. You always have priority with your baby and we want you to hold your baby as soon as your baby's condition permits. Skin-to-skin holding is a wonderful way to provide meaningful touch that only you as a parent can provide. Ask your nurse when skin-to-skin holding is appropriate for your baby.

**NICU clinical caregivers** love the precious moments that they can provide purposeful and positive touch, and do provide this when possible.

**NICU Cuddlers** are hospital volunteers who are selected and trained to participate as a Cuddler in the NICU. **Cuddlers require special education, and must comply with the hospital's infection prevention and safety precaution policies.** Your baby will be transferred by the nurse to the Cuddler and then back to the bed with each cuddling session.

If a NICU caregiver or Cuddler are holding your baby when you arrive at the hospital, your nurse will transfer your baby to your arms.

## What questions do I have?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding NICU Cuddling or do not wish to participate, please notify your baby's caregivers (nurse, physician, practitioner, or therapists).

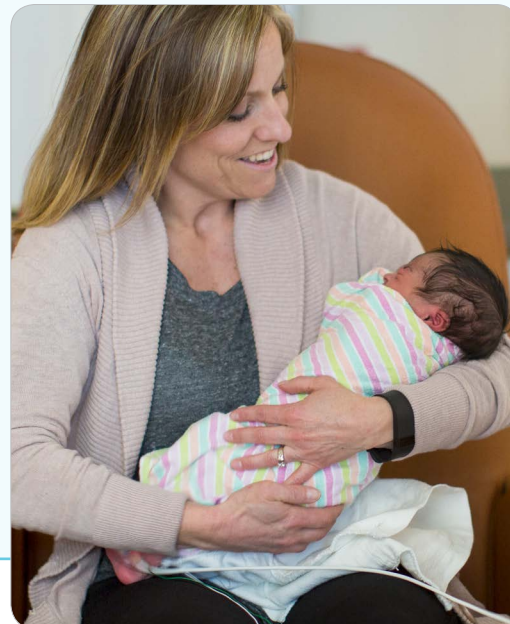
## Where can I learn more?

You can learn more about the NICU Cuddler Program by scanning this QR code.



### Your touch, voice, and cuddling of your baby are important!

A NICU clinical caregiver or Cuddler can help to cuddle your baby if you are not there.



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