

A mother's guide to using a kangaroo care sling on Mary Ward

Skin to Skin contact for an hour or more a day can boost your baby's development, protect and enhance their growth and overall health and deepen the attachment between parent and baby. On Mary Ward we have slings you can borrow during your stay.



If you would like to borrow a sling while you and your baby are staying on Mary Ward please ask a member of staff or a breastfeeding peer supporter. They will show you how to use a sling and talk you through the important safety tips you need to know.

Safety information

When you are wearing a sling for skin contact don't forget the following:

- ✓ **TIGHT** – slings should be tight enough to hug your baby close to you as this will be most comfortable for you both. Any slack/loose fabric will allow your baby to slump down in the carrier which can hinder their breathing and pull on your back.
- ✓ **IN VIEW AT ALL TIMES** – you should always be able to see your baby's face by simply glancing down. The fabric of a sling or carrier should not close around them so you have to open it to check on them. In a cradle position your baby should face upwards not be turned in towards your body and be in view at all times.
- ✓ **CLOSE ENOUGH TO KISS** – your baby's head should be as close to your chin as is comfortable so you only need to tip your head to kiss your baby.
- ✓ **KEEP CHIN OFF THE CHEST** – a baby should never be curled so their chin is forced onto their chest as this can restrict their breathing. Ensure there is always a space of at least a finger width under your baby's chin.
- ✓ **SUPPORTED BACK** – your baby should be held comfortably close to you so your baby's back is supported in its natural position and your baby's tummy and chest is against you. If the sling is too loose your baby may slump which can partially close their airway. (This can be tested by placing a hand on your baby's back and pressing gently - they should not uncurl or move closer to you.)

The VIJA slings are designed to help you have skin contact with your baby. They are not for walking around the ward.

Borrowing and returning your sling

When we lend you a sling we will record this along with your contact details so we can contact you if you accidentally take it home.

Please return your sling to the reception desk on Mary Ward when you leave so it can be washed ready for the next mum.

If you have any queries please contact: Sally Tedstone Infant Feeding Specialist sally.tedstone@nhs.net 01225 821945

Further information, resources and support;

<https://www.nct.org.uk/parenting/babywearing-and-how-choose-sling>