

KANGAROO MOTHER CARE CHALLENGE

Thank you for accepting the Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) challenge. This brief details how to take the challenge and more information about the intervention.



Why take the KMC Challenge?

- Raise awareness about preterm birth including prevention numbers and solutions for prevention and care
- Initiate discussions about KMC and the enablers and barriers to scaling up this intervention to all who qualify
- Experience some of physical realities of providing KMC (recognizing that KMC with a doll is much easier compared to a live baby requiring care)

Instructions

1. **Learn about kangaroo mother care (KMC)** by reading this brief and accessing additional information on the [Healthy Newborn Network](#).
2. **Know what you are signing up for**
 - The challenge asks people to practice KMC with a baby doll for 24 hours (including sleeping in an upright position with the baby still on the front of the person skin-to-skin).
 - Additional information is available in the blog "[A challenge to you: Try kangaroo mother care for one day.](#)"
3. **Accept the challenge**
 - Find a baby doll and a wrap
 - The wrap can be a long piece of cloth or one designed for KMC (see end of document for instructions)
 - The doll should be small enough to fit comfortably on your chest
 - Place the baby doll on your chest in an upright position, preferably "skin-to-skin". For the purpose of the challenge, it would be okay to wear it over your shirt/blouse.
 - Use a wrap to secure the doll firmly on your chest
 - Turn the doll's head to one side with the top of the wrap just under its ear. The baby dolls hips should be flexed and extended in a "frog" position; the arms should also be flexed.
 - Sleep with the baby in position in a reclined or semi-recumbent position
 - See [WHO official practical guidance](#)
 - Practice KMC with the doll for 24 hours and be prepared to engage in discussions with people when they ask what you are doing.
4. **Document your experience**
 - Take pictures throughout your 24-hours and post on social media using **#KMCChallenge**
 - Share your photos, experience, and feedback on [facebook.com/worldprematurityday](https://www.facebook.com/worldprematurityday)

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Facts about preterm birth and kangaroo mother care

Did you know that preterm birth is the leading global killer of young children?

Every day, 2,900 children die from preterm birth complications. In 2015, direct complications from preterm births accounted for 947,000 deaths during the first 28 days of life and an additional 111,000 deaths between the ages of one month and five years.¹

Did you know we have solutions to prevent these deaths, including Kangaroo Mother Care?

Kangaroo mother care – or KMC – is an effective way to help meet a premature baby’s basic needs for warmth, nutrition, stimulation, and protection from infection. Parents of newborns weighing 2000 g or less at birth - either due to prematurity or low birthweight – are encouraged to use KMC, which involves continuous skin-to-skin contact with the baby for at least 20 hours every day and exclusive breastfeeding.

What is Kangaroo mother care (KMC)?

KMC refers to the practice of providing continuous skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby, exclusive breastmilk feeding, and early discharge from hospital. KMC was developed in the 1970s by a Colombian pediatrician.

Why is KMC an important health intervention?

KMC has the potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives each year. Evidence indicates that this intervention can decrease mortality and morbidity in preterm and low birthweight infants by providing protection from infection; regulating temperature, breathing, and brain activity; and encouraging mother-baby bonding. In fact, KMC is associated with over a 40 percentage reduction in mortality of low birthweight infants in low-resource settings when compared to conventional neonatal care. Furthermore, investment in KMC has proven beneficial effects beyond survival, including healthy growth and development.

Why is the KMC challenge important?

Only a very small proportion of newborns who could benefit from KMC receive it. Despite its potential to save thousands of babies every year, KMC has not had widespread scale-up in either high-income or low-income settings. We must raise awareness about the importance of this intervention.



A midwife in Nigeria helps a new mother wrap her preterm baby in the KMC position.

Photo: Jane Hanh/Save the Children

World Health Organization Recommendations

Kangaroo mother care is recommended for the routine care of newborns weighing 2000 g or less at birth, and should be initiated in health-care facilities as soon as the newborns are clinically stable.

Newborns weighing 2000 g or less at birth should be provided as close to continuous Kangaroo mother care as possible.

Intermittent Kangaroo mother care, rather than conventional care, is recommended for newborns weighing 2000 g or less at birth, if continuous Kangaroo mother care is not possible.

Source: [WHO 2016](#)

¹ Data calculated from UNICEF database 2016 available at data.unicef.org

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Instructions on the Kangaroo Mother Care Thari wrap



Figure 4. The KMC wrap.



Figure 5. Wrap bottom straps around back.



Figure 6. Cross bottom straps and bring to front.



Figure 7. Secure with square knot just below the breasts.



Figure 8. Wrap top straps around back.



Figure 9. Cross straps and bring over shoulders.



Figure 10. Straps crossed in back.



Figure 11. Position infant.



Figure 12. Tie top strap to bottom strap using square knot.



Figure 13. Tie other top strap to bottom strap.



Figure 14. Infant secure in KMC wrap.



Figure 15. Center piece properly positioned beneath infant's ear.

These pictures demonstrate how the thari wrap used in South Africa should be tied and how the infant should be positioned. A doll was used for this demonstration.

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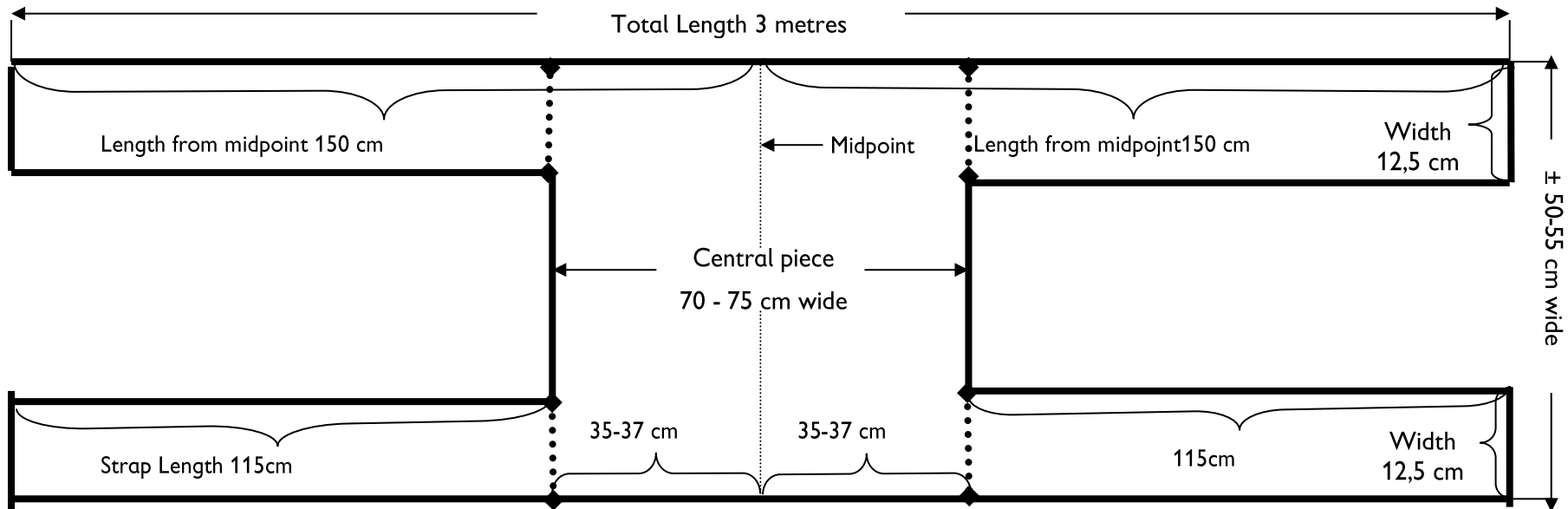
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Kangaroo Mother Care Thari Pattern

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Over lock the rough edges



Seams connecting straps to centrepiece



Choices of material from which to make the Thari

Polyester Cotton: It works well and is cheap. The material tears easily and it is not necessary to cut the material with a pair of scissors. Poly cottons are usually 110 cm wide and 2 wraps can be made from 2 metres of material.

Cotton knit (t-shirt material): T-shirt material stretches a lot. It would be better to use a material that contains lycra, but lycra is very expensive.

A thin Denim material also works well, it lasts very long especially if you use it over and over in the ward, but unfortunately denim is quite expensive.

Wraps can be made from old sheets, if funds are not available to buy new material.