

Touch

Leaflet **3**



Touch

With babies admitted to the neonatal unit, it is best to provide **a containing touch** (facilitated tucking) and **light pressure**.

Physical barriers can also be provided to mimic the uterine wall. It is also recommended to reproduce the foetal tucked-in position (arms and legs slightly bent; hands close to the mouth).

Here are the main principles of touch:

Facilitated tucking/containment

- Use the palm of your hands to provide a global touch rather than your fingertips for a light touch so that your baby feels enveloped/contained instead of stimulated at a specific spot of the body.
- Tuck/contain two parts of his/her body with your hands (head, buttocks, upper body, etc.) to promote the foetal position. Pay attention to your baby's behaviours and reactions to learn about his/her preferences for being touched.
- Envelop your baby with one arm (this then acts as the uterine wall) and place your other hand on his/her body.
- Place a blanket over your baby's body and under your hands to maximize the tucking/containment effect.

Pressure

Place your hands on your baby's body, exerting light to moderate pressure, **without moving** (avoid light brushing, superficial massages, tickling, etc.).

Barriers

Place rolls of blankets or positioning aids close to your baby's body to help him/her maintain a contained and secure foetal tucked-in position.

Place these aids all around your baby to create a positioning nest. This allows your baby to reorganize himself/herself, feel secure and exercise his/her muscles.

A set of 11 leaflets

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The content of this leaflet is taken and translated from the book *Être parent à l'unité néonatale: tisser des liens pour la vie* (2017) written by Marie-Josée Martel and Isabelle Milette in collaboration with Audrey Larone Juneau, inf. CHU Sainte-Justine.

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The baby's sense of touch develops in the mother's womb with the containment and pressure provided by the amniotic fluid.

The uterine wall also helps your baby feel secure and exercise his/her muscles.