

Maternal singing during skin-to-skin contact benefits both preterm infants and their mothers

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This image depicts maternal singing. Credit: Shmuel Arnon

A mother who sings to her preterm infant while providing 'kangaroo care,' or holding with direct skin-to-skin contact, may see improvements in both her child's and her own health. The finding comes from an *Acta Paediatrica* study of 86 mother-infant pairs in a neonatal intensive care unit in Meir Hospital in Israel.

Compared with preterm infants whose mothers just held them with direct skin-to-skin contact but did not sing, infants whose mothers both held them and sang to them had improved heart rate variability patterns. This combined effect of holding and singing also caused mothers to feel less anxiety.

"We recommend combining kangaroo care and maternal singing for stable preterm infants. These safe, inexpensive, and easily implemented therapies can be applied during daily neonatal care," said lead author Dr. Shmuel Arnon.

More information: Arnon,S., Diaman,C., Bauer,s., Regev,R., Sirota,G. and Litmanovitz, I. (2014), Maternal singing during kangaroo care led to autonomic stability in preterm infants and reduced maternal anxiety. *Acta Paediatrica*, [DOI: 10.1111/apa.12744](https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.12744)

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