



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on September 1, 2010

“The Kangaroo Touch” Revives Australian Preemie

Called “the kangaroo touch” in Australia and also “kangaroo care,” the method used by Kate Ogg in Sydney last spring worked almost like a miracle. She had just given birth prematurely to twins, and while Emily’s birth was uneventful, her twin brother, Jamie, was not as fortunate.



After a 20-minute struggle with the difficult delivery, the doctor saw no apparent vital signs, and declared him dead. According to his mother, “His little arms and legs were just falling down away from his body.” That was when Jamie’s parents decided to try kangaroo care, though they also thought it might well be their goodbye embrace to their new little son.

Said Kate according to the [New York Daily News](#):

“I took my gown off and arranged him on my chest with his head over my arm and just held him.” She and her husband, David, spoke to the child as she continued to embrace him for nearly two hours. During that time, she said, the two-pound infant showed signs of life.

“I told my mum, who was there, that he was still alive. Then he held out his hand and grabbed my finger,” Ogg said.

“Oh my God, what’s going on?” was Kate’s thought. The doctor dismissed the development at first, but was shocked when he put a stethoscope to Jamie’s chest. “I don’t believe it — I don’t believe it!” he exclaimed. The kangaroo touch — named after the manner in which mother kangaroos carry their young against their warm bodies in their pouches — had caused little Jamie to stir after a few minutes, and then open his eyes.

Continued the *Daily News*:

According to Dr. Pinchi Srinivasan, director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Neonatology at New York Hospital Queens, the procedure consists of positioning a premature baby on its stomach — clad only in a diaper — against a woman’s chest and between her breasts with “skin-to-skin contact.”

“The care helps the baby maintain body warmth.” It also “regulates their heart and breathing rate,” and is believed to contribute to weight gain and improved sleeping habits.

Fathers can also use “kangaroo care,” the doctor noted. The key to the method, he explained, is not the gender of the person, but the skin-to-skin contact.

According to the [Gather.com](#) website, after the baby has been placed in contact:

Generally the infant is covered with a hat and blanket next. According to Dr. Karen Hendricks-Muoz, the Chief of Neonatology from New York University Medical Center, this technique hasn’t



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been used a lot but is very effective. It was first developed in Bogota back in the late 70's. Since 1999, the method has been endorsed and used not only to help the survival, but also for enhancing breastfeeding and the baby's growth. It can be mostly used in the instances of pre-term bab[ies] in underdeveloped countries.

In such countries where modern hospital equipment is scarce, the kangaroo touch is more common. It was studied in both Europe and the U.S. through the 1980s, and is becoming a better-known option for the treatment of premature infants. Dr. Srinivasan stated, "It is credited with helping to shorten the amount of time a baby spends in the NICU."

Kate and David Ogg told their story on CBS's [The Early Show](#) for Saturday, August 28. They feel blessed that their twins are healthy and doing well five months after little Jamie's dramatic entrance — and the success of that day's kangaroo care.



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