



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Hand Containment

Hand containment is a gentle and active way to help your baby into a tucked or flexed position. Hand containment gives gentle but firm pressure on the arms, legs and/or head or bottom. This helps to soothe, console or calm your baby. Hand containment has also been shown to help babies feel less discomfort during care.

Reasons to do hand containment

Hand containment is a great alternative when you cannot hold your baby.

Hand containment helps your baby by:

- Minimizing flailing of arms and legs during care
- Helping to use self-soothing skills, like grasping, or bringing hands to the mouth or together at midline
- Soothing when baby is agitated
- Offering a sense of security
- Reducing perception of pain during and after procedures
- Giving support during caregiving tasks
- Helping to save energy
- Helping to steady vital signs



Picture 1 How hand containment is done.

When hand containment is done

- Any time your baby is not able to be held
- During stressful caregiving tasks
- When infants need help to control their movements
- When an infant needs help to calm down or stay calmly alert

How to do hand containment

1. Wash and warm your hands then speak softly to let your baby know you are there.
2. Gently cup your baby's head and bottom and hold without moving.
3. If your baby's arms and legs are moving frantically or "stuck" out into extension, gently offer support at the feet and chest to help the baby slow down his or her movement.
4. If your baby's arms and legs are limp or floppy, gentle scoop up the arms and legs and softly hold them tucked in towards the baby's body.
5. Hand containment is not a restraint so be sure to soften and offer your baby some room to move as tolerated.
6. Try to keep your hands as still as possible. When your baby is relaxed or sleeping, see if you can very slowly remove your hands while your baby stays calm.
7. Ask your nurse for assistance to use positioning aids when you are ready to leave. The positioning aid will help your baby stay tucked and relaxed.