

**Please join us in introducing Lovey Dolls to the NICU!**

**The sense of smell is the first sensory system to develop in the fetus. Infants are able to recognize familiar scents as early as 28 weeks gestation both from exposure in utero and after birth. Exposure to the scent of mother's milk has been shown to promote calming, improve breathing and stimulate sucking in premature babies. The centers in the brain that detect scents are closely connected with areas that process emotion and memory, both of which are important in development from infancy through childhood.**

**Our goal is for all NICU parents to be given a Lovey Doll when their baby is admitted. The parents put the doll in their shirt during their visit, and then it is placed in the infant's bed to provide the parents' scent for the baby. Lovey Dolls provide an opportunity for parents to play an active role from birth in the life of their infant.**

**Parents will be given washing instructions with the Lovey Doll. They will be asked to wash it in hot water about once a week with hypoallergenic/unscented detergent and bring it back to the NICU in a clean Ziplock bag. They will then sleep with it in their shirt after washing, or wear it while in the NICU.**

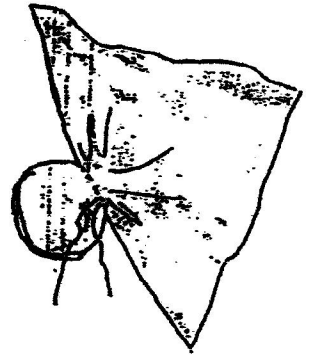
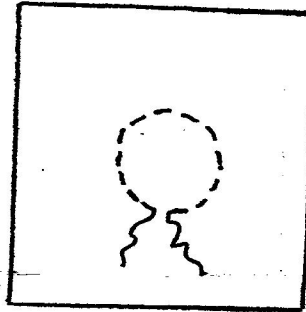
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## Lovey Dolls

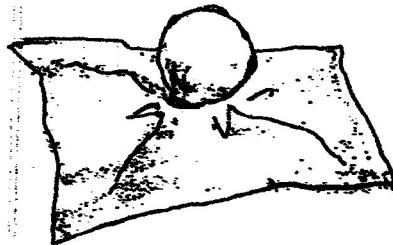
*Wash flannel prior to sewing.*

Start with a 19" X 19" square of flannel. Using a dressmaker's marker, draw a circle in the middle of the square (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in diameter).

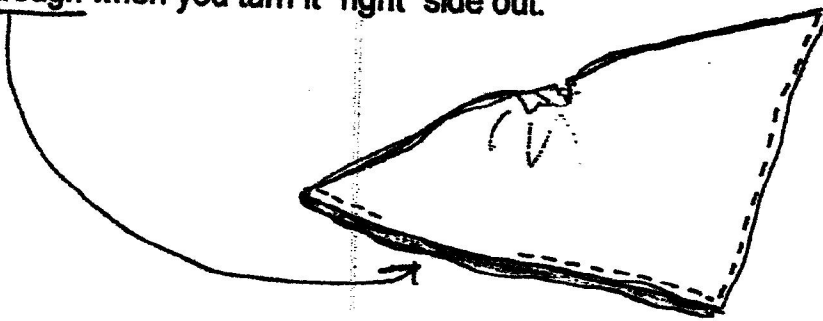
Using 2 strands of embroidery floss, sew a Basting stitch around the circle, leaving the Ending threads free. Pull the threads to gather The circle, making a pouch for the doll head.



Stuff the pouch fully, then draw the embroidery floss tight to mostly close up the hole. Tie off the ends securely to finish the head. The doll should look like a square with a head in the middle.

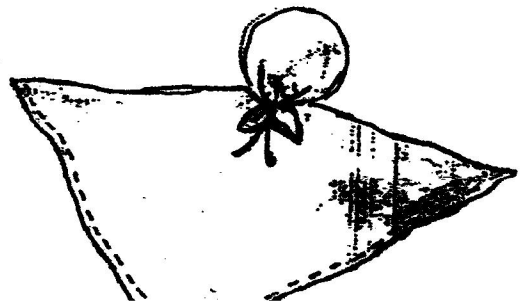


Now, fold the square in half, "right" sides together. The doll will resemble a triangle with a lump on the inside. Stitch the sides closed, leaving enough open to get the head through when you turn it "right" side out.



Once the doll is right side out, press the seams nice and flat. Top stitch the two edges to securely close the opening. Finish with a ribbon around the neck.

*Stitch and secure ribbon at "tie point"*



*Infection Control Information*  
*NOTE: NO smoking environment*  
*no pets*