



FIG 8-7 Infant under plastic wrap, which produces a draft-free environment. (Photo courtesy E. Jacobs, Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, TX.)

Skin-to-skin (kangaroo) contact between a stable preterm infant and parent is also a viable option for interaction because of the maintenance of appropriate body temperature by the infant. Other benefits of skin-to-skin contact are discussed later in this chapter.

Protection from Infection

Protection from infection is an integral part of all newborn care, but preterm and sick neonates are particularly susceptible. The protective environment of a regularly cleaned and changed incubator provides effective isolation from airborne infective agents. However, thorough, meticulous, and frequent hand washing is the foundation of a preventive program. This includes *all* persons who come in contact with infants and their equipment. After handling another infant or equipment, no one should ever touch an infant without first washing their hands.

Personnel with infectious disorders are either barred from the unit until they are no longer infectious or are required to wear suitable shields, such as masks or gloves, to reduce the likelihood of contamination. An annual influenza vaccination is recommended for NICU personnel. **Standard precautions** as a method of infection control are instituted in all nursery areas to protect the infants and