



Skin to Skin

What is Skin to Skin?

- skin to skin means placing your baby naked on your chest immediately after birth
- skin to skin means continued cuddling, and soothing of your baby on your body as much as possible in the first few months
- skin-to-skin means no blankets or clothing between mother and baby

How does skin to skin help my baby?

- skin to skin is very important for your baby's healthy growth and development
- your body is the most familiar, calming and healthy place for your baby to grow and thrive
- skin to skin may make the adjustment to life after birth a little easier for your baby
- your baby recognizes your smell and voice. Avoid using perfumes, scented lotions, or soaps to cleanse the nipple. Right after the birth these will not be familiar to your baby

Your baby, kept skin to skin with you, is more likely to:

- latch on more easily and breastfeed well
- have better digestion
- cry up to 10 times less
- have relief from pain when painful procedures are done
- maintain a better temperature than if wrapped in blankets
- have normal blood sugar and less likely to be supplemented



How does skin to skin help moms?

- brings greater blood flow to your breasts
- helps you to digest food more fully, helping you to make milk and maintain energy
- decreases stress hormones, making you more calm
- increases your pain threshold and improves healing
- increases oxytocin levels which may in turn decrease the chances or severity of post partum depression. Oxytocin is known as the hormone of wellbeing and it can help you form an attachment to your baby
- it is also helpful for dads or other support people to cuddle the baby skin to skin when you are not able to



What about babies who are born early or who are sick?

Premature babies who have lots of skin to skin contact with their mothers may:

- be discharged from hospital sooner
- have fewer health issues (like difficulties with blood pressure, heart rate and breathing)
- maintain better blood glucose levels
- keep better oxygen levels
- breastfeed better at discharge
- have lower levels of stress
- gain a healthy amount of weight

Even if a baby has an intravenous he can still spend skin to skin time at your breast.
Consider talking to your doctor or nurse about providing this for your baby.



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