

Skin to Skin Contact with your Baby

Skin to skin contact is beneficial for both you and your baby. Your midwife will offer skin to skin contact to you at delivery.

Why Skin Contact Is Important

- Keeps baby warm
- Calms you and your baby
- Your baby's heart rate and breathing will be better controlled
- Encourages bonding between you and your baby
- Regular periods of skin contact in the early month increases a baby's brain development
- Skin contact and early feeding promotes successful breastfeeding

Weighing Your Baby

Your midwife will either weigh your baby soon after delivery and then you can have skin contact or you can have skin contact first and then have the baby weighed later.

How to Do Skin Contact

After birth your baby will be gently dried and placed on your chest in an upright position, with their chest to your chest. A blanket will be placed over your baby but not covering the baby's head.

Whilst baby is in skin contact make sure you can see your baby's face and can hold your baby safely. It is advisable that your birth partner stays with you in the room after delivery while you are having skin contact with your baby.

Skin to skin contact should continue uninterrupted for as long as possible immediately after delivery and continue long enough for the baby to show signs of being ready to feed (this can take up to an hour or more). You can of course choose to end this contact whenever you wish.

Make the most of this special time immediately after the birth of your new baby. At no other time will you or your baby have such high levels of hormones to encourage bonding.

Your baby will, if left uninterrupted in a quiet and unhurried environment go through a pattern of behaviour to show that he/she is ready to feed. At this point you will be offered help to feed your baby.

If you require a caesarean section to deliver your baby, we will ensure that you will receive skin to skin contact as soon as possible after your operation.

All mums regardless of type of birth can be transferred to the postnatal ward in skin contact if they wish.

Points to Remember

In the early days skin to skin contact will be of great benefit in encouraging your baby to feed and for you to get to know your baby. Skin to skin contact will help to keep your baby warm so do not worry about your baby getting cold.

Skin to skin contact is useful at any time in a baby's first year of life e.g. if your baby is very unsettled. The close contact and warmth from your body along with your regular heart rate and breathing will comfort and calm your baby. Partners can also have skin contact to help settle and get to know their baby.

Babies Admitted To Neonatal Unit

Sometimes it may not be possible to have skin to skin contact with your baby straight away, for example if your baby is unwell or very premature. However, skin to skin contact can be introduced gradually as your baby gets better. There are huge benefits of skin to skin contact for premature babies and we actively encourage this.

For more information ask your midwife

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