

Skin-to-Skin Care

What is Skin-to-Skin Care?

Skin-to-skin care is holding and cuddling your undressed baby on your bare chest, skin-to-skin. Your baby will be in a comfortable position, just like when he or she was inside of Mom's belly. Skin-to-skin care is very good for Mom, Dad and baby.



Skin-to-skin care helps babies:

- ✓ have a more regular heart beat
- ✓ have easier breathing
- ✓ tolerate feeds better
- ✓ sleep better and longer
- ✓ be more alert and calm when they are awake
- ✓ tolerate procedures better
- ✓ grow better

Skin-to-skin care can also help you get to know your baby. It gives you more time to hold your baby close to you. This can help Mom make more breastmilk, and may help promote breastfeeding. Skin-to-skin may make you feel better knowing you are helping your baby get stronger.

When can I start Skin-to-Skin Care?

We know how much you want to hold your baby. Your baby's nurse and doctor can help you see signs that show how your baby is feeling. You may not be able to hold your baby if he or she is very sick or just had surgery.

If your baby is feeling well, you can hold your baby skin-to-skin. Moms and Dads can do skin-to-skin care.

How do I prepare for Skin-to-Skin with my baby?

Before coming to do skin-to-skin care, it is important that you have a shower or bath. Dads who are planning to do skin-to-skin care should wash their chest too.

Wear a light-weight shirt or blouse that buttons up at the front.

How do I do Skin-to-Skin Care?

- Depending on your baby's condition, skin-to-skin care is usually done for at least one hour at a time. Make sure to eat, pump and use the bathroom before your cuddle.
 - Skin-to-skin care is done right at your baby's bedside. If you would like privacy, the nurse can pull the curtains or a screen around you. Start by dressing your baby in just a diaper. Your baby's heart monitor will be left on so we will know how well your baby is doing.
 - If your shirt or blouse doesn't open in the front, ask your nurse for a gown to change into at your baby's bedside.
 - Next, your nurse will find a chair for you and place it at your baby's bedside. Your nurse will help you take your baby out of his or her bed and make sure that you are both comfortable.
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- When you are comfortable, undo your shirt or blouse. Your baby's nurse can help you put your baby in a comfortable position on your chest. The nurse will look after all of the wires and tubing connected to your baby. Wrap your shirt or blouse around your baby to keep him or her warm. A blanket may be put over your shirt or blouse to help keep your baby warm.
- During skin-to-skin care, your baby may snuggle, stop fussing or fall asleep. Your baby's nurse will watch your baby's heart beat, breathing, temperature and oxygen levels. They should all stay close to "normal" for your baby. Sometimes your baby may need more time to settle on your chest.

The healthcare team will always make sure that skin-to-skin time is safe for your baby.

- When you are finished holding your baby, your nurse will help you put your baby back to bed.



**Skin-to-skin is the most helpful way
to hold your baby!**



**Making it a part of your baby's daily routine
helps you become more comfortable with each other.**