



Importance of Skin to Skin Contact

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In countless TV shows and movies, newborn babies are handed to their mothers only after being wrapped in a blanket.

In real life, research tells us skin-to-skin contact is one of the best ways to help your baby at this critical time. It has a long list of benefits for both of you.



Being skin-to-skin provides a wonderful thermal blanket for your newborn. During the first four to six hours after birth, your baby is going through a major transition and cold can create stress. Skin-to-skin contact is even more effective than the traditional baby warmers used in hospitals.

Watch a video about Breastfeeding and Skin-to-Skin Contact

Skin-to-skin contact right after birth:

- Eases the baby's transition and recovery from the stress of being born.
- Warms babies better than an overhead heater.
- Lessens the amount of crying. Babies taken away from their mothers cry up to 90 times more often than if they're left skin-to-skin. Crying is stressful for a newborn and wastes energy. If mom is not available, skin-to-skin with the partner or support person is also beneficial.
- Releases calming hormones in the mother. These same hormones help her bond and feel close to her baby. Babies who have skin-to-skin contact breastfeed for a longer term than babies who don't.
- Helps baby latch on well to the breast.
- Strengthens baby's immune system. Babies' bodies - particularly their intestines or 'guts' - need healthy bacteria acquired from their mothers' skin. The healthy bacteria from the mother protects baby from unhealthy bacteria.

Resources & Links:

HealthLink BC: Breastfeeding

HealthLink BC: Bonding with your Newborn

VIDEO: Admission to Postpartum - Keeping Your Baby Skin-to-Skin

VIDEO: Baby's Feeding Cues and Behaviours

VIDEO: Breastfeeding Positions

VIDEO: Cup Feeding and Other Feeding Methods

VIDEO: Hand Expressing Milk

VIDEO: Latching Your Baby

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