



Skin-to-skin...
the healthiest
place to begin



Thunder Bay District
Health Unit

Skin-to-skin... is easy

Here's how:

- 1** Take off your baby's blankets and clothing. Leave a diaper on.
- 2** Move clothing away from your chest and tummy.
- 3** Hold your baby, facing you, against your chest or tummy.
- 4** You can put a blanket over you and your baby.
- 5** Enjoy the closeness and bonding with your baby.
- 6** When you are ready to sleep, place your baby in their crib, on their back, in your room. It is important that cribs and cradles meet current Canadian safety regulations.

Babies love skin-to-skin contact

Your bare chest is the best place for your baby to adjust to life outside the womb. Your baby smells you, hears you, feels you and gets to know you. Skin-to-skin contact means holding your bare baby against your bare chest or tummy.

Skin-to-skin babies stay warmer, calmer and breastfeed better than babies who are swaddled or wrapped. Skin-to-skin is soothing for your baby.

Your baby's first hours

The first hours of snuggling skin-to-skin help you and your baby bond and get to know each other. Hold your baby belly-down on your chest or tummy immediately after birth until the first feeding is done (about 2 hours).

Keep cuddling skin-to-skin as often as possible in the months after birth. The benefits for bonding and breastfeeding continue long after that. Skin-to-skin is also better for babies born prematurely or by Caesarean birth. Research has shown that skin-to-skin is the best place for your baby to adjust to life in the outside world.

If you haven't held your baby skin-to-skin yet, start now! It's not too late.

Skin-to-skin beyond the first hour

Continue making time to snuggle skin-to-skin with your baby. It will help keep your baby interested in breastfeeding if he is sleepy. Research shows that babies of all ages, including preterm, benefit from skin-to-skin.

Skin-to-skin helps you breastfeed

Your baby is more likely to have a successful first breastfeed.

Your baby may breastfeed sooner and longer.

You will make more breastmilk.

It can make it easier to breastfeed a sleepy baby.

Hold your baby **skin-to-skin**
as much as possible





Skin-to-skin contact has many health benefits for both you and your baby

BABY

- Breastfeeds easier
- Cries less and is calmer
- Stays warmer
- Enjoys more comfort from you
- Has better blood sugar levels and heart rate
- Is protected by some of your good bacteria

MOTHER

- Breastfeeds more easily, creates more breastmilk
- Learns when baby is getting hungry
- Bonds more with baby
- Gains confidence and satisfaction caring for baby
- Is more relaxed



Partners and family

Your partner can also spend skin-to-skin time with your baby. Your partner and baby will experience many of the skin-to-skin health benefits.

Family members can plan skin-to-skin time with your baby, too. It's a great way to bond with your baby.

References:

Moore ER, Anderson GC, Bergman N. (2007). Early skin-to-skin contact for mothers and their healthy newborn infants (Cochrane Review). The Cochrane Library. 2009; (1).

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