SKIN-TO-SKIN

The healthiest place to begin

Thunder Bay District Health Unit

www.TBDHU.com/lactation

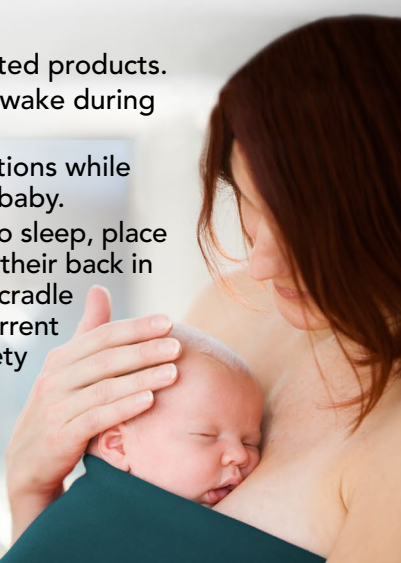
Skin-to-skin is easy

Here's how:

1. **Get Comfortable**
   - Move clothing away from your chest and tummy.
   - Sit in a comfortable semi-reclined position.
2. **Prepare Your Baby**
   - Undress your baby, leaving only a diaper (and hat/socks if needed).
3. **Position Your Baby**
   - Place your baby upright, facing you, against your bare chest or tummy.
   - Keep their head turned to one side with their face and nose visible.
4. **Keep Baby Warm**
   - You can put a blanket over you and your baby, keeping their face uncovered.
5. **Relax and Bond**
   - Relax, breathe normally, and enjoy the closeness.
   - You may softly talk or sing to your baby.

Safety Tips

- Remove scented products.
- Always stay awake during skin to skin.
- Avoid distractions while holding your baby.
- When ready to sleep, place your baby on their back in a safe crib or cradle that meets current Canadian safety standards.



Babies love skin-to-skin contact

Your bare chest is a comforting place for baby to adjust to life outside the womb. Baby can smell you, hear you, feel you and get to know you.

Skin-to-skin contact means holding your baby, wearing only a diaper, against your bare chest or tummy.

Babies held skin-to-skin stay warmer and calmer. They often breastfeed better than babies who are swaddled or wrapped. Skin-to-skin helps soothe your baby.

Your baby's first hours

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

Keep doing skin-to-skin as often as possible in the weeks and months after birth. The benefits for bonding and breastfeeding continue over time. Skin-to-skin is especially helpful for babies born prematurely or by Caesarean birth.

If you haven't tried skin-to-skin yet, you can start anytime. It's never too late.

Skin-to-skin after the first hour

Make time each day for skin-to- skin cuddles. It can help keep a sleepy baby interested in feeding. Research shows that babies of all ages, including preterm, benefit from skin-to-skin contact.

Skin-to-skin supports breastfeeding

Skin-to-skin contact can help:

- Get breastfeeding/chestfeeding off to a good start
- Improve feeding success
- Increase breastmilk supply
- Encourage feeding in sleepy babies
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible

Health benefits of skin-to-skin

FOR BABIES

- Feels comfort and security from you
- Steadier heart rate and blood sugar
- Gain protection from your healthy bacteria
- Cries less and feels calmer
- Helps regulate body temperature
- Supports successful breastfeeding/chestfeeding

FOR PARENTS

- Supports breastfeeding/ chestfeeding and milk production
- Helps parents recognize hunger cues
- Strengthens bond and attachment with baby
- Builds confidence in caring for baby
- Promotes relaxation

Partners and family

Partners can also enjoy skin-to-skin time with baby. Both the partner and baby will benefit from this close contact.

Other family members can plan skin-to-skin time as well. 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).

Marin Gabriel MA, Martin IL, Escobar AL, Villalba EF, Blanco IR, Pol PT. (2010). Randomized controlled trial of early skin-to-skin contact: effects on the mother and the newborn. Acta Paediatrica. 99(11): 1630-34.

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