

Holding Your Baby Skin-to-Skin

Skin-to-skin contact is an amazing start for you and your baby.

It helps your baby:

- Adjust to life in the outside world
- Regulate heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar, breathing, and body temperature
- Develop protection against harmful bacteria
- Feel safe and warm
- Calm down when fussy & cry less
- Control pain during blood tests and needles
- Get off to a good start with feeding

It helps you:

- Bond with your baby
- Feel more confident caring for your baby
- Recover from giving birth, and regulate hormones
- Recognize when your baby is hungry
- With breastfeeding and milk supply

For babies: The first few hours of skin-to-skin, right after birth, without interruption is important. Take this time to watch your baby as they begin life outside the womb. You may want to hold off on visitors during this very special time. If you have a cesarean birth (c-section), you and your baby can still do skin-to-skin.

You are welcome to hold your baby skin-to-skin frequently during your hospital stay. If you are unable to, offer your partner or support person the opportunity.

For babies in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: Skin-to-skin care is very important. Speak with your baby's doctor or nurse about how this will work for you.



At home:

Continue skin-to-skin as often as possible. Your partner can also enjoy skin-to-skin time, or a family member (with your permission). Older babies benefit from skin-to-skin too. It helps them grow and develop, feel secure, and it decreases pain during needles and blood tests.

How to do skin-to-skin safely:

Every time your baby is skin-to-skin, make sure your baby's:

- shoulders and chest face you
- face is visible
- head is up (in 'sniffing' position), not looking down
- nose and mouth are not covered
- head is turned to one side
- neck is straight, not bent
- legs are in a frog-leg position, and
- back is covered with a blanket

If you are sleepy, put your baby in the crib or skin-to-skin with someone else who is alert. Do not risk falling asleep with your baby skin-to-skin.