



Holding Your Baby Skin-To-Skin

Hold your baby skin-to-skin as soon as possible after birth unless there is a medical reason. If you are unable, your partner or support person can do it until you are ready.

Skin-to-skin without interruption for an hour or more after birth helps your baby adjust to the outside world. Your partner or support person is also encouraged to hold baby skin-to-skin often.

Skin-to-skin contact helps get breastfeeding off to a good start, but **it is important no matter how you plan to feed your baby.**



Skin-to-skin contact helps your baby

- have normal breathing, heart rate, and blood sugar
- cry less and stay warm
- have less pain during blood tests and vaccinations

If you have a caesarean birth (C-section), you and your baby can still do skin-to-skin as long as you are awake, alert and there are no medical concerns. Speak with your baby's healthcare provider about how this will work for you.



For babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), skin-to-skin (also known as Kangaroo Care) is very important. Speak with your baby's healthcare provider about how this will work for you.

Skin-to-skin contact helps you

- bond with your baby
- recover from giving birth
- learn when your baby is hungry
- build your milk supply



At home: Continue holding your baby skin-to-skin often. Older babies benefit from skin-to-skin contact too. It helps them grow, develop and feel safe.

Safe skin-to-skin contact

For safe skin-to-skin contact:

- sit in a laid-back position
- make sure you are alert and not sleepy
- have good lighting so that you can see your baby's skin colour

Make sure your baby's:

- shoulders and chest are facing you
- face is visible and nose and mouth are not covered
- head is turned to one side; neck is straight
- head is tilted up (in a 'sniffing' position)
- legs are in a 'frog' position



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