

## **Skin to Skin Contact Improves Breastfeeding**

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Skin-to-skin contact between a mother and her baby after delivery is associated with successful breastfeeding. Skin-to-skin means that the naked baby is placed on the mother's bare chest shortly after birth and if necessary both of them can be covered with warm blankets. Skin-to-skin contact helps to regulate the baby's heart rate and temperature. Most babies who are left skin to skin for the first hour after delivery with their mother are able to find their way to the mother's breast and are able to latch on to the breast and to latch on well.

Mothers should be encouraged to keep their infant with them during the hospital stay. This increases opportunities for mother baby bonding and provides opportunities for the mother to respond to the early feeding cues of her baby and to breastfeed frequently. Research suggests that mother's get the same amount of sleep if the infant rooms in with her or if the infant is sent to the nursery.

A variation of skin-to-skin care for premature babies is called Kangaroo Mother Care. The mother is in an upright position with the baby skin-to-skin on her bare chest. Premie babies may have improved stability with Kangaroo Mother Care than in incubators. Babies were significantly warmer in their mother's arms than in an incubator and burned fewer calories when being held than in the incubator.

Keeping the baby close to the mother is important not only after birth but also in the first weeks after birth. Skin-to-skin at home helps with bonding, soothing, and breastfeeding. Skin-to-skin contact may also be useful later as a technique for improving breastfeeding latch on and improving milk transfer and improving infant weight gain.

Contact the WIC office 327-7488 if you have questions about breastfeeding.

Resources:

<http://www.bfmed.org/Resources/Protocols.aspx>

<http://www2.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab003519.html>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1595228/>

[http://www.nbci.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=82:the-importance-of-skin-to-skin-contact-&catid=5:information&Itemid=17](http://www.nbci.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82:the-importance-of-skin-to-skin-contact-&catid=5:information&Itemid=17)

<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241590351.pdf>