

Skin-to-Skin Care

Skin-to-skin, also known as Kangaroo Care, is the nurturing act of placing an infant against a parent's chest. After the separation of birth, this type of holding can be done to help foster the special mother and baby bond. Kangaroo care is also beneficial when done by fathers.

Benefits of Skin-to-Skin Include:

- ✓ Improves baby's heart rate
- ✓ Stabilizes baby's breathing pattern
- ✓ Increases the amount of oxygen in baby's blood
- ✓ Controls baby's temperature and blood sugar
- ✓ Decreases crying
- ✓ Promotes better breastfeeding, increases milk production and enhances baby's immunity to infections
- ✓ Baby sleeps better
- ✓ Improves bonding
- ✓ Increases parental confidence

How to Do Skin-to-Skin

- Raise the head of your bed 25-45 degrees
- Remove your bra and any piece of clothing that would prevent your baby from laying directly skin-to-skin on your chest
- Place your baby, wearing only a diaper and a hat, in an upright position on your chest. The baby's legs should be flexed and baby's head should be turned to the side, tilted slightly upward in a "sniffing position"
- Fold your baby's blanket into a triangle and cover the baby's body from the shoulders down
- Once in position, your baby should stay skin-to-skin for at least one hour to ensure one sleep cycle is completed
- Loud conversations should be avoided during this time

Your nurse will discuss skin-to-skin with you and assist you in placing your baby in position the first time and as needed. With help, parents of multiples can safely hold two to three babies skin-to-skin at the same time. To keep your newborn safe, never sleep while holding your baby.

Practicing Skin-to-Skin After You Leave the Hospital:

We encourage you to share skin-to-skin closeness as often as you'd like. The extra sleep and assistance in regulating body temperature will help your baby conserve energy and redirect calorie expenditures toward growth and weight gain. Plan on providing skin-to-skin contact every day for your baby's first six months of life.