

## **Skin-to-Skin Contact**

Skin-to-skin contact is an opportunity for all mothers to hold their baby close to their skin at the birth. Your midwife should offer skin contact to you. The Trust encourages you to hold your baby for at least 30 minutes or longer if you wish. Whether you decide to breast or bottle feed your baby can have skin contact at any time in the hospital or when you have gone home.

If you have a Caesarean section or forceps delivery you will be offered skin contact as soon as possible.

Your baby will be dried well after birth and left undressed against your skin. You and your baby will be covered to ensure warmth and privacy.

You do not need to worry about what you are wearing. Your baby can be tucked down the front of your nightdress or tee shirt. You can be transferred to the ward having skin contact. Dads may also like the opportunity of having skin contact with their babies.

### **Why is it important**

- Research shows that skin contact and early feeding promotes successful breastfeeding
- Skin contact keeps your baby warm and helps to calm your baby
- Breast feeding contracts your uterus(womb) this will help to get your figure back
- Skin contact encourages bonding between you and your baby
- Babies having skin contact cry less

### **Feeding Your Baby**

Not all babies want to feed immediately after birth. Injections you may have had for pain relief can make your baby sleepy at delivery. Your baby may be happy just being close to you, listening to your heartbeat and the sound of your voice.

Your baby will show signs when he/she is ready to feed. Your baby's instinctive behaviour is to open his/her eyes and mouth and move his/her head from side to side these are called feeding cues. You will quickly learn these signs over the next few days and weeks.

### **Weighing your Baby**

Your midwife will either weigh your baby after delivery and then you can have skin contact or you can have skin contact first and then have your baby weighed. You may wish to let your family know that sometimes they may not find out the baby's weight immediately.

### **Babies admitted to Neonatal Unit**

The staff on neonatal unit will encourage you and your partner to have skin- to-skin contact. The staff will ensure privacy and help you get comfortable whilst your holding your baby. Parents you have had skin contact have stated that they have enjoyed the closeness they felt with their babies.

**References:**

1. Widstrom A-M et al (1990) Short-term effects of early suckling and touch of the nipple on maternal behaviour. Early Human Development
2. Gonazles RB(1990) A large scale rooming-in program in a developing country: the Dr Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital experience. International journal of gynecology and obstetrics 31(Supplement 1):31-34
3. de Chateau P,Wiberg B(1977a) Long-term effect on mother-infant behaviour of extra contact during the first hour post partum: II. A follow up at three months. Acta paediatrica Scandinavica 66:154-151

**Further information**

For further information please contact the Infant feeding team at Liverpool Women's Hospital on 0151 702 4293 there is a list of useful web sites which can be found on the Liverpool Women's Hospital web site.

Go to

[www.lwh.org.uk](http://www.lwh.org.uk)

Click on

Clinical Services



Support & Information



Useful organisations

If you require any advice about the information on the web sites please speak to a midwife or doctor at the hospital or a community midwife at the GP surgery.

**This information is available in different formats on request**

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