

Breastfeeding...

Skin to Skin

What is skin to skin?

Skin to skin contact is a method of infant care that mimics that natural habitat for the infant. It has numerous benefits for the newborn infant as well as the premature infant. Sometimes, in premature infants, skin to skin is also called kangaroo care. If you have a premature infant, talk to the staff in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) about skin to skin and kangaroo care. Policies vary by NICU.

Benefits of Skin to Skin

- Baby is happier
- Baby's temperature is more stable (mom's temperature will adjust to the needs of the baby!)
- Baby's heart rate is more stable
- Baby's breathing rate is more stable
- Baby's blood sugar is more elevated
- Baby is able to be colonized by the same bacteria as the mother (boosting their immune system.)
- Baby gets the greatest opportunity to explore mom, find the breast and latch on their own!
- Babies typically latch better with skin to skin
- It's amazing to watch and comforting for mom and dad



How to do skin to skin

- 1) Talk with the staff assisting with the delivery of your infant about your desire to do skin to skin immediately after birth
- 2) After baby is born, baby should be dried and placed directly on mother.
- 3) Baby should be placed skin to skin, mom and baby both with their skin exposed (no blankets).
- 4) Let baby explore!
- 5) Baby will pass through a series of many different stages of exploration in the first hour after birth, watch the amazing process but try not to help baby.
- 6) Do skin to skin for at least the first hour after birth, delay other procedures until after this time.
- 7) Continue skin to skin with infant as much as possible in the first week or two of life.

Need breastfeeding help? Call 715-421-8911 for a lactation consultant.

References: Dr. Jack Newman "The Importance of Skin to Skin Contact" 04/13

