

Good for parents

- ✓ Helps you get to know your baby
- ✓ Allows you and baby to gaze into each other's eyes
- ✓ Helps you bond with your baby
- ✓ Increases your confidence in caring for your baby
- ✓ Lowers your blood pressure
- ✓ Slows your heart beat
- ✓ Increases 'love hormone'
- ✓ Reduces chances of getting post-partum depression



And for the birth parent:

- ✓ Helps you make more milk
- ✓ Helps your birth recovery
- ✓ Increases your milk-making hormones

How to do skin-to-skin safely

- Position yourself so you are little upright, not lying flat.
- Turn your baby's head to one side making sure the head is slightly tilted up and away from their chest.
- Keep baby's neck straight, not bent too far forward or backward.
- Make sure you can see your baby's nose and mouth.
- Tuck baby's legs up and bring their hands up near baby's face.
- Cover baby's back with a thin blanket.
- Let your baby stay on your chest for as long as possible while you are awake.
- If you feel sleepy, have someone watch your baby, or put your baby on their own sleep surface.

Did you know?

Using your cell phone can distract you. It can keep you from noticing if your baby has trouble breathing.



Want to learn more about skin-to-skin?

Fraser Health
fraserhealth.ca
Search "safe skin-to-skin"



Or scan this QR code

Fraser Health
patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca
Search "safe skin-to-skin"



HealthLinkBC
healthlinkbc.ca
Search "Baby's Best Chance"



Or scan this QR code

Perinatal Service BC
perinataleservicesbc.ca
Search "Kangaroo Care"



Or scan this QR code

Unicef UK
unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly
Search "skin to skin"



Or scan this QR code

We thank the parents who graciously allowed photos of them with their babies

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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For more copies: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Safe Skin-to-Skin Cuddling



**Good for Baby
Good for You**



Why safe skin-to-skin cuddling is good for baby

Creates a natural place

All babies benefit from skin-to-skin time with their parents.

When held skin-to-skin, your baby:

- hears your heart beat and your voice
- smells your skin and breast milk
- feels you breathe and move
- touches your skin
- is less likely to cry

Overall, it helps your baby adjust to the world outside the womb.

Safe Skin-to-skin

- Bare chest to bare chest –



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If you have any questions about safe skin-to-skin, ask your baby's nurse.

Helps the brain develop

At birth, **smell** and **touch** are important. The first 2 hours after birth, the brain starts making lots of connections that can have a lifelong effect on learning and behaviour. Your touch and your smell help build these connections.

Your voice also helps your baby learn language. Skin-to-skin is a good time to talk, sing, and read to your baby.

Studies tell us that safe skin-to-skin cuddling in early life:

- gives your baby a good start in growing emotionally
- creates trust between you and your baby
- promotes baby's self-confidence and improved social relationships later in life

Did you know?

When a baby is not held skin-to-skin by their parents, the baby's stress hormones rise. This makes it hard for the baby's body to control temperature and heart rate. Also, increased stress hormones are harmful to a baby's brain.



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Improves body systems

The best way to regulate your baby's body systems is to cuddle your baby skin-to-skin.

Skin-to-skin can help keep your baby's:

- heart and breathing rates steady
- blood sugar at normal levels

Skin-to-skin helps keep your baby's temperature steady. Studies done with mothers tell us that skin-to-skin with the birth parent can raise a baby's temperature up to 2°C or lower it by 1°C.

Also, skin-to-skin contact exposes your baby to good bacteria on your skin and this helps protect your baby.

Helps with breastfeeding or chestfeeding

The World Health Organization recommends that all babies remain skin-to-skin with mothers until after the first feeding.

Ideally, you should have continuous skin-to-skin contact for the first 2 hours after birth.

We also suggest you safely hold your baby skin-to-skin for most of the next 24 hours. After this, hold your baby skin-to-skin every day in the first few months and whenever your baby needs comfort. The more skin-to-skin contact, the better. Being close to you and smelling you helps your baby learn to root and search for the breast. With smell and very little help, your baby can latch on and suck.

Signs of hunger:

- turning head toward or rooting around on the chest
- opening and closing mouth
- sucking on fingers or skin
- putting hand to mouth



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