

Builds the parent/child bond

Skin-to-skin is a great way to get to know your baby. Studies show skin-to-skin in early life gives your baby a good start in growing emotionally and creates trust between you and your baby.

Good for parents too

- ✓ Helps you bond with your baby
- ✓ Increases your confidence in caring for your baby

For mothers:

- ✓ Lowers blood pressure
- ✓ Slows heart beat
- ✓ Helps make more breast milk
- ✓ Helps with wound healing
- ✓ Reduces chances of getting post-partum depression



How to prepare for skin-to-skin

- Talk to your baby's nurse about when and how to hold your baby skin-to-skin.
- Get yourself ready to do skin-to-skin with your baby. You will be sitting for at least one hour, preferably longer.

Once your baby is skin-to-skin

- Turn your baby's face to one side in a position that allows baby to breathe easily.
- Tuck baby's legs up and bring their hands up near baby's face.
- Cover your baby's back. You may want to cover baby's head as well.
- Let your baby stay on your chest for at least one (1) hour. The more skin-to-skin contact, the better.

Giving 'hand hugs'

When your baby cannot come out of the incubator, you can give your baby 'hand hugs'.

How to hand hug:

- Bring both of baby's arms close in front of baby's body.
- Gently cup your baby's head with one hand.
- Gently cup your baby's feet with the other hand.
- Keep your hands steady and still while you give your hand hug.



Thank you to all the parents who graciously allowed us to use photos of themselves and their babies.

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

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To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Skin-to-Skin Cuddling

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit



Good for Baby
Good for You

 **fraserhealth**

Why skin-to-skin cuddling is good for baby

Skin-to-skin

- Bare chest to bare chest -

Creates a natural place

All babies benefit from skin-to-skin time with their parents. It is especially important for babies born early.



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.

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. Skin-to-skin with mother 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.



A 'term pregnancy' is when the delivery happens between 39 weeks and 41 weeks. When a baby is born early, the estimated date of delivery is their 'term date'.



Helps the brain develop

Your baby's brain grows 4 times in size between 24 and 40 weeks of pregnancy. Hearing, smelling, feeling, and touching you helps your baby develop a healthy brain.

When babies get closer to their term date and are awake, they practice seeing - looking up at you and at the world around them. Your baby's language skills are helped by hearing your voice. Skin-to-skin is a good time to talk, sing, and read to your baby.

Helps with breastfeeding

Being close to you and smelling you helps your baby learn to root and search for the breast. With a little help, your baby can learn to latch on and suck.

If your baby starts to move around and look for the breast, talk to your baby's nurse about helping your baby latch on.

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

Even premature babies can practice latching on and breastfeeding.

