



FAMILY BIRTH PLACE

# Skin-to-skin Care

## What is skin-to-skin care?

Skin-to-skin care is a way of holding your baby similar to how kangaroos hold their young in a pouch. Wearing only a diaper and possibly a cap, your baby is placed on your bare chest between your breasts. You then cover your baby's back with a blanket or your own clothing, creating a snuggly pouch for your baby.

Skin-to-skin care is a special kind of care fathers can provide as well. Both full-term and premature babies can benefit from skin-to-skin care. If your baby is in the NICU, skin-to-skin care is one of the best ways you can help your baby grow stronger and healthier.

## What are the benefits of skin-to-skin care for babies?

Skin-to-skin care can help babies:

- Maintain their body warmth.
- Regulate their heart and breathing rates.
- Lower their oxygen requirements.
- Sleep more deeply.
- Cry less often.
- Start breastfeeding successfully.
- Gain weight more quickly.
- Leave the hospital sooner.

## When can I start skin-to-skin care?

Healthy newborns stay warmer and transition to life outside the womb more easily when they have skin-to-skin contact with mom for at least one hour immediately after birth. Being close to the mother allows a newborn to hear their mother's heartbeat and feel her touch.

However, if your baby is in the NICU, talk to your baby's care team about when your baby is stable enough to begin skin-to-skin care. Even while connected to machines, babies can benefit from skin-to-skin time.

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Learn more at  
[AdventistHealth.org/  
PortlandBirth](https://AdventistHealth.org/PortlandBirth) or scan  
the QR code.



### How do I provide skin-to-skin care?

Wear a shirt or blouse that opens in the front. Ideally, mothers should remove their bras. Once your shirt is opened, your baby will be placed on your chest in an upright position. Then, you should cover your baby's back with your shirt or a blanket. Once settled, you should plan on providing your baby with skin-to-skin care for at least an hour.

If your baby is in the NICU, you may be nervous about starting skin-to-skin care. Know that you are helping your baby grow healthy and strong. Enjoy this precious time together.

### What other support does the Family Birth Place provide?

Family Birth Place provides:

- Private suites where you and your support person remain for your entire labor, delivery and recovery.
- “Rooming in” to allow your baby bond with you in your suite.
- Online birth and parenting classes to set you up for success.
- Breastfeeding support.
- Midwifery services and suites for unmedicated births.

