

# Between you and me...

*skin to skin is where we begin.*



## What is skin to skin contact?

Skin to skin is a way of holding your baby against your bare chest from birth to the first three to four months of life. It can be used when Mom is resting or when the baby needs assistance stabilizing. All babies, even premature babies or babies taken to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), can benefit from skin to skin. It can be used whether Mom is breastfeeding or bottle feeding.

## What are the benefits of skin to skin?

### **For baby:**

- Helps stabilize baby's temperature and blood sugar
- Regulates baby's heart rate and breathing
- Improves baby's sleep
- Prepares baby to breastfeed
- Calms and soothes baby
- Reduces crying

### **For Mom:**

- Helps Mom know when baby is ready to breastfeed
- Helps increase milk production

- Lowers stress and can help normalize blood pressure
- Helps with bonding
- Can lower Mom's pain level

## When and How to Begin

Unless there are complications, you may hold your baby skin to skin immediately after birth. Your nurse will help you position and hold your baby while you're still in the delivery room.

Once you move to the maternal infant unit, we encourage you to continue skin to skin during those times when you are awake. It's as easy as 1 - 2 - 3:

1. Remove your baby's clothing (keep diaper and hat on), and open your shirt or gown (no bra).
2. Place your baby face down on your bare chest, and turn his or her head to one side or the other.
3. Cover your baby's back with a blanket, relax and enjoy.

**And remember, dads can do it too!**