Early Skin-To-Skin Care

Skin-to-skin care means placing your undressed baby on your chest against your skin under a blanket or under your clothing.

Being skin-to-skin helps your baby feel secure, stay warm and maintain a healthy blood sugar.

The nurse will place your baby on your chest immediately after birth. Skin-to-skin care lasts at least one hour. Bathing and other nonessential tasks take place after this important skin-to-skin time. Essential tasks, such as listening to your baby's heart and lungs, will take place while the baby is on your chest. Frequent skin-to-skin contact is encouraged during the postpartum period.

Skin-to-skin contact improves breastfeeding.

- Babies can smell colostrum. Amniotic fluid smells similar to colostrum. Babies are drawn to the breast by this familiar scent.
- When placed skin-to-skin, babies often move toward the mother's breast and sometimes latch without help.
- Skin-to-skin time gives your baby more opportunities to breast-feed.
- Babies placed skin-to-skin are more alert for feedings.
- Babies placed skin-to-skin breast-feed better and longer.
- Hand movements at your breast and your baby's sucking will encourage your body to produce milk and ensure a good milk supply.

Skin-to-skin placement is important because it:

- Stabilizes your baby's temperature and vital signs
- Improves your baby's oxygen and blood sugar levels
- Stimulates your milk production
- Causes your uterus to contract, resulting in less bleeding
- Comforts your baby so he or she may cry less
- Promotes bonding
- Comforts your baby and reduces your pain after delivery
- Helps you bond with your baby, which brings in more breast milk and makes breastfeeding easier.

The whole family can participate.

Continue skin-to-skin time with your baby for several days after delivery. It promotes successful breastfeeding, and it can awaken your baby to feed if he or she is too sleepy to nurse. Skin-to-skin care is a good way to keep your baby warm and comforted. It's also a great way for your partner and baby to bond.