

Fact Sheet

Skin to Skin

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Skin-to-skin contact (baby naked on mother's chest-kangaroo care) plays an important role in the wellbeing of mother and baby, it provides an opportunity for bonding and helps with the first breastfeed.

An unhurried or unlimited period of skin to skin immediately after birth is encouraged or as soon as is possible. Skin to skin should also continue for as many hours as possible through the day and night for the first number of weeks.

Skin to skin contact has been known to;

- increase maternal attachment behaviors
- protect against the negative effects of maternal-infant separation
- support optimal infant brain development
- promote initiation of the first breastfeed, resulting in increased breastfeeding initiation and duration rates.



Being skin to skin with mother has many positive effects for the baby and the mother.

Benefits for baby:

- maintains body temperature - within minutes of being skin to skin, the mother's breasts automatically adjust to cool baby down or warm up
- maintains heart rate, respiratory rate and blood pressure- through skin to skin baby's body learns to self-regulate, resulting in a regular and stable heart beat and breathing pattern
- maintains blood sugar levels
- is less likely to cry – direct connection with your skin during kangaroo care soothes baby so much that babies stress and pain levels are lowered after only 20 minutes. Babies who experience regular skin to skin contact often cry less and appear less agitated
- is more likely to latch onto the breast well, will indicate to mother when ready to feed
- is more likely to breastfeed exclusively and for longer
- enhances immune system- the mothers mature immune system passes antibodies through her skin and breast milk to baby.

Benefits for mother

- speeds recovery time - increased levels of oxytocin (love hormone) are released during skin to skin contact with her baby which helps lower blood pressure, lowers stress levels reduces postpartum bleeding and increases pain intolerance

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- reduces risk of postnatal depression and promotes psychological wellbeing
- increases milk production –the surge in oxytocin and prolactin levels in the early hours of birth appear to have long-term effects in increasing milk supply.

Being skin to skin with the mother is the best way for baby to adjust to life outside the womb. It is not only safer for both babies and mothers, but provides many short and long term benefits. Skin to skin contact is good at any time. It will help to comfort you and your baby over the first few days and weeks as you get to know each other



We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service.

Send your feedback to:

WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au