



# It's Worth It!

## Skin to Skin



### What is Skin to Skin Contact (SSC)?

Skin to skin contact is simply holding your baby dressed in a diaper against your chest. Mom and baby should practice skin to skin contact right after birth, if possible and continue in the early weeks at home. Partners can do it too, especially if mom is not available after birth due to medical reasons.

### Why is Skin to Skin Contact Important?

Newborns placed skin to skin have better blood sugar levels, steady body temperatures, stable breathing and heart rates, and cry less compared to those who do not receive skin to skin care.

### Benefits of Skin to Skin Contact

- Relaxes mother and baby
- Increases bonding
- Strengthens baby's immune system
- Eases pain
- May enhance brain development
- Warms baby
- Less crying

Additional benefits of skin to skin contact are easier breastfeeding and increased bonding.



Source: U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

### Skin to Skin Contact & Breastfeeding

Practicing skin to skin contact will help you and your baby breastfeed. When placed skin to skin before breastfeeding:

- Baby's first time latching onto the breast is easier.
- Baby is more likely to breastfeed better and longer without the need for formula.
- Keeping baby skin to skin helps breast milk flow.

***“When my daughter and I met for the first time, skin to skin contact helped us form a bond to last a lifetime.”***

## Getting Started – What to Expect in the Hospital

Let hospital staff know you want to hold your baby skin to skin, as soon as you can. Just after delivery, your nurse will put your baby on your chest and cover you both with a warm blanket.

Snuggle baby and allow him or her to explore. He or she may crawl towards your breast and try to latch onto your breast.

It is ideal to stay skin to skin for close to one hour after birth. Many required medical activities such as weighing, measuring, and the vitamin K injection can wait or be done while you and baby are together.

Certain medical causes may delay skin to skin. That's okay! Just start as soon as possible, or have dad or your partner give it a try. Skin to skin contact helps them bond with baby too!

## Skin to Skin at Home

There is no age at which skin to skin is no longer recommended. So you can keep cuddling skin to skin after you leave the hospital. Here are some tips to help you:

- Keep cuddling skin to skin after you leave the hospital.
- At home, try holding baby dressed in a diaper against your chest. You can put a blanket on baby's back or try wearing an oversized shirt to use as a cover for both of you.
- Hold baby upright between your breasts and enjoy each other's company.
- If baby begins to look for your breast, follow your instincts to help baby latch on.
- Don't forget about your partner! Parents who hold babies skin to skin help keep them calm, cozy, and warm.

## Learn More About Skin to Skin Contact

Please visit the websites below for more information on skin to skin contact and breastfeeding.

- **Breastmilk- Every Ounce Counts**  
<http://www.breastmilkcounts.com/breastfeeding-101/skin-to-skin/>
- **US-DHHS Office of Women's Health**  
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/printables-and-shareables/resource/guides>
- **Connecticut It's Worth It! Webpage**  
<http://www.itsworthitct.org/>
- **Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition**  
<http://www.breastfeedingct.org>

### Do you have a breastfeeding story that you would like to share with others?

If so, please submit photos, written stories or videos of what breastfeeding means to you to, and why you think It's Worth It! at:

[info@breastfeedingct.org](mailto:info@breastfeedingct.org)

Your story may help others feel more confident and encouraged in meeting their breastfeeding goals.



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