Skin-to-skin

Skin-to-skin is the healthiest place to begin. Babies love skin-to-skin contact. Your bare chest is the best place for your baby to adjust to life outside the womb. Your baby smells you, hears you, feels you and gets to know you. Skin-to-skin contact means holding your bare baby against your bare chest or tummy. Skin-to-skin babies stay warmer, are calmer and breastfeed better than babies who are swaddled or wrapped. It's soothing for your baby.

Your baby’s first hours

The first hours of snuggling skin-to-skin will help you and your baby bond and get to know each other. Hold your baby belly-down on your chest or tummy immediately after birth until after the first feeding (approximately 2 hours later).

Be sure to let your healthcare provider know, before you go into labour, that you would like to hold your baby skin-to-skin right after birth until you are done the first feeding. If you are giving birth in the hospital, it is important to let the nurses and other care providers know your wishes about skin-to-skin, as well.

Keep cuddling skin-to-skin as often as possible in the months after birth. The benefits of skin-to-skin for bonding and breastfeeding continue long after the first weeks. Skin-to-skin is also better for babies born prematurely or by Caesarean birth. If you haven’t held your baby skin-to-skin yet, start now! It’s not too late.

Skin-to-skin beyond the first hour

Continue making time to snuggle skin-to-skin with your baby. It will help keep your baby interested in breastfeeding if he is sleepy. Research shows that babies of all ages, including preterm babies, benefit from skin-to-skin.

Learn how to use skin-to-skin to reduce pain during your baby's immunizations.

Health Connection

Call [Health Connection](https://www.healthunit.com/health-connection) to speak with a Public Health Nurse from the Middlesex-London Health Unit.

* 519-663-5317 ext. 2280
* Monday - Friday
* 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Skin-to-skin helps you [breastfeed](https://www.healthunit.com/breastfeeding)

* Your baby is more likely to have a successful first breastfeed
* Your baby may breastfeed sooner and longer
* You will make more breast milk
* Skin-to-skin can make it easier to breastfeed a sleepy baby
* Skin-to-skin contact has many health benefits for both you and your baby

With skin-to-skin, your baby:

* [Breastfeeds](https://www.healthunit.com/breastfeeding) easier
* Cries less and is calmer
* Stays warmer
* Enjoys more comfort from you
* Has better blood sugar levels and heart rate
* Is protected by some of your good bacteria
* Is more comfortable during painful procedures, such as immunizations

With skin-to-skin, you:

* [Breastfeed](https://www.healthunit.com/breastfeeding) more easily
* Create more breast milk
* Learn when your baby is getting hungry
* Bond more with your baby
* Gain confidence and satisfaction caring for your baby
* Are more relaxed

Skin-to Skin is easy

Here’s how:

1. Take off your baby’s blankets and clothing. Leave a diaper on.
2. Move clothing away from your chest and tummy.
3. Hold your baby, facing you, against your chest or tummy.
4. You can put a blanket over you and your baby.
5. Enjoy the closeness and bonding with your baby.
6. When you are ready to sleep, place your baby in their crib, on their back, in your room. It is important that cribs and cradles meet current Canadian safety regulations.

Partners and family

Your partner can also spend skin-to-skin time with your baby. Your partner and baby will experience many of the skin-to-skin health benefits.

Family members can plan skin-to-skin time with your baby too. It’s a great way to bond with your baby.

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