

# Skin-to-skin Contact



## *The Advantages*

In the past years more and more attention has been drawn to the importance of skin-to-skin (STS) contact: placing the naked baby on the naked breast of mother (or father), covering them both with a warm blanket. Being STS with mom right after birth is the ideal place for the baby and mother to rest, adjust to life outside the womb, and start breastfeeding. In the days and weeks after birth, regular STS contact with mother and/or father is also very beneficial. When in STS contact with your baby, the hormone oxytocin will be released. Oxytocin will not only cause milk ejection and your uterus to contract, it makes you relaxed and sleepy, it enhances your maternal feelings and the bonding between you and your baby.



There are many more advantages of STS contact with your baby:

- It is the best way to maintain the baby's temperature (also for sick and premature infants). When in STS contact with mom, the temperature of the breasts adapt to the baby's temperature: when the baby is warmer, mom's breasts are cooler; when the baby's temperature is a bit low, then mom's breasts will be warmer
- Your baby feels protected, is calmer, and cries ten times less than a baby who has been separated from his mother
- It promotes stable breathing in the infant
- It promotes good oxygen and stable glucose levels
- Your baby will have a stable, regular heartbeat and blood pressure
- It promotes the baby's instinctive behavior, which will increase the chance to successfully breastfeed
- Your baby will be colonized with the same bacteria as his mother, which will enhance the baby's immunity



### ***When, How Long, How Often?***

Ask the doctor who delivers your baby to place the baby on your abdomen, close to your heart, immediately after the baby has been born. Continue STS contact for at least an hour and until the first breastfeeding is accomplished. As long as the baby's condition is good, hospital routines like weighing, measuring, observing, washing, dressing the baby, and giving him vit. K can all be postponed till after the first breastfeeding. Even if you have had a caesarian section, the baby can be placed on your abdomen or put in STS contact with the baby's father until mom is ready. Discuss your wishes with the hospital staff during pregnancy!

After this initial time of STS contact, continue to put your baby STS with mom and/or dad regularly in the days and weeks to come. The more STS contact, the greater the benefits! You may for example choose to have STS time after the baby has had a bath, half an hour prior to nursing; Dad can have some STS with the baby as he rests on the sofa after getting back from work. Be creative and make the most of this special time with your baby as you hold him STS!



Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this program.

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