

Saying hello to your baby

Skin to skin contact is the best way to welcome your baby

Hold your baby skin to skin

Holding your baby in skin to skin contact immediately after birth stimulates powerful surges of mothering hormones, this helps you to begin bonding with your baby.

We encourage all mums to hold their baby in skin to skin contact as it is the best way we know of helping him to feel safe and calm following birth.

You can watch a DVD of skin to skin contact at www.bestbeginnings.org.uk

Skin to skin contact has been shown to provide the following benefits:

- Makes both mum and baby calm and relaxed.
- Regulates heart rate and breathing in the baby.
- Stimulates baby's digestion.
- Regulates baby's temperature.
- Enables colonisation of baby's skin with mothers friendly bacteria, and provides protection from infection.
- Stimulates feeding behaviour.
- Stimulates the release of hormones to support breastfeeding and mothering.



After the birth, your baby will be gently dried and then placed on your chest; a warm blanket will be placed over you. It would be helpful to wear a front opening shirt or loose t-shirt. Because this is such a special time we will not hurry you, we suggest that you stay in skin to skin contact with your baby for at least the first hour or until after he has had his first feed. We encourage all mothers to give the first feed in skin to skin contact to maximise all these benefits for both you and your baby.

We would then encourage you to keep having long periods of skin to skin contact with your baby in the first weeks following his birth to help to get to know each other.

If either mum or baby is unwell and unable to have skin to skin contact immediately after birth, we will start skin to skin as soon as you are both well enough.



Conversations in pregnancy: Key Points

1. Saying hello to your baby can start today

Starting to form a relationship with your baby in pregnancy is helpful to parents in many ways; it supports the transition to parenthood and lays the foundations for strong & loving bond. During pregnancy your babies brain is growing very quickly and you can help this growth by taking some time out to relax and talk to your baby, to stroke your bump and maybe play some music to your baby. Encourage other close family to do the same.

2. A warm welcome after the birth

Skin contact is a lovely way to say hello to your baby. After your baby is born hold your baby close against your skin as soon as possible, and for as long as you want. This will calm them and give you both the chance to rest, keep warm and get to know each other. We encourage all mums to keep baby in skin to skin contact until after the first feed.

3. Responding to baby's needs

Keep your baby close so that you can start to recognise the signals your baby makes to tell you they are hungry or wants a cuddle. Responding to these signals will make your baby feel safe. Breastfed babies cannot be over fed so you can use breastfeeding to soothe your baby and as a way of spending time together or having a rest. Responding to your baby's needs for food & comfort will help them to feel secure, so they will cry less, which helps make your life easier too. Research shows that babies who are responded to in this way grow into more confident toddlers. Looking at your face is the best way for babies to learn. Talking, listening and smiling triggers oxytocin and helps your babies brain grow.

4. Feeding your baby

Breastfeeding is a important way to provide protection, comfort and food for your baby. Skin to skin contact immediately after birth is an important way to get feeding off to a good start, most babies will feed in the first hour if held in this way. staff will be around to help get feeding right in the early days which is important to make sure you don't get sore and you baby gets a good feed. We will make sure you know what signs to look out for to know your baby is getting enough milk. Babies feed frequently in the early days, this is normal and is your baby's way of stimulating your milk supply Finding out about feeding during pregnancy can be really helpful, but you don't have to decide how to feed your baby until after you have met your baby.

Signature:

Date:

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