

# The Importance of Skin-to-Skin Contact Immediately After Birth

**“The first hour outside the womb is a special time when a baby meets his or her parents for the first time and a family is formed. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and should not be interrupted unless the baby or mother is unstable and requires medical intervention. It is a ‘sacred’ time that should be honored, cherished and protected whenever possible.”**

Raylene Philips MD, IBCLC, FAAP

There are now a multitude of studies that show the benefits when mothers and babies are kept together, skin-to-skin immediately after the birth, as well as later. Once your baby is delivered, they will be placed directly on your chest. The umbilical cord will then be clamped and cut. All initial newborn assessments and care of a full-term healthy baby can be done while your baby is skin-to-skin on you. This includes drying, weighing, measuring and the administration of medication. Although everyone anticipating the birth of your baby is anxious to learn of their weight and length, these tasks can and should wait until the baby has gone to breast and/or been skin-to-skin with you for at least one hour or longer.

## Benefits of Skin-to-Skin for Both You and Your Baby:

- Promotes bonding, decreases your anxiety and decreases postpartum pain;
- Stabilizes the newborn’s respirations, oxygen level in the blood and blood sugar level;
- Maintains your baby’s optimal temperature – the temperature of a mother’s chest can increase to warm a cool baby or decrease to cool an overly warm baby;
- Your baby will cry less and appear less stressed;
- Helps you to be more relaxed and confident in caring for your baby;
- Helps your milk flow and can also aid in increasing a low milk supply;
- Allows you to recognize your baby’s early feeding cues; and
- Increases the likelihood that your baby will breastfeed exclusively and for a longer duration.

As part of our “Baby Friendly Promise” to you and your family, our staff in the Maternal Infant Child program will do everything possible to promote and encourage mothers and their families to hold and feed their babies skin-to-skin as much as possible regardless of your feeding choices. As always, we encourage you and your partner to express your wishes to your physician and our staff prior to the birth of your baby.

We wish you well and look forward to caring for you and your new family.