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Skin to skin care

What is skin to skin contact?

This is when babies are dried at birth and laid directly onto their mother's chest. Both mum and baby are kept warm with a blanket or towel and left for at least an hour or until the end of baby's first feed.

When can skin to skin contact take place?

This can take place any time a baby or mum needs comforting or calming.

What are the benefits of skin to skin contact?

- Your body warmth will help your baby adjust to being outside the womb. It also helps to stabilise baby's temperature.
- Skin to skin contact helps to reduce you and your baby's stress levels.
- Our natural skin bacteria helps protect our bodies from infection. Skin to skin contact allows your skin bacteria to move over to your baby. This provides protection for your baby.
- Skin to skin care helps you both to get to know each other, beginning the mother-infant bond.
- It makes your baby interested in feeding, and increases your hormone levels so that you produce more breast milk.
- You can still enjoy skin to skin care even if you choose to formula feed your baby. This close and loving experience will help to form a close bond and attachment with your baby and helps make your baby feel calm and safe.

Skin to skin safety considerations

Before you try skin to skin contact, consider these questions:

- ! Was your baby born in good condition?
- ! Have you had sedation or a General Anaesthetic or do you feel drowsy?
- ! Are you positioned well, in a position that is halfway between lying flat and sitting up (called semi-recumbent), ready for skin to skin?
- ! Is your baby positioned securely on your chest with their face to the side and head slightly raised?
- ! Are you able to see your baby clearly during skin to skin?
- ! Has your midwife discussed with you how to ensure your baby is safely cared for whilst having skin to skin contact with you/your partner?