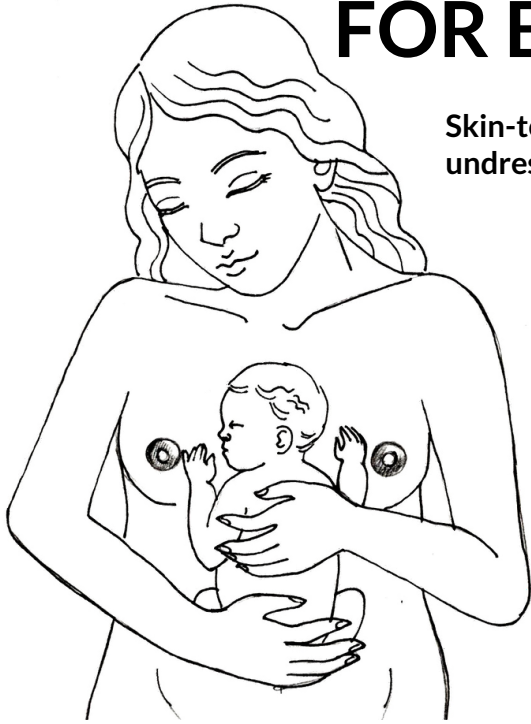


SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT FOR BABIES & YOUNG CHILDREN



Skin-to-Skin Contact (SSC) is a method of nurturing care, where baby is undressed and cuddled in a safe position, between a mother's bare breasts.

- In SSC, babies feel like they're back in the womb, safe and connected. The love hormone, oxytocin, is released and relaxes mother and child. Helpful in stressful times, and during emergencies, SSC reduces risk of depression, and aids bonding. SSC calms a crying baby, and partners can do SSC too!
- Babies should receive at least 90 minutes of SSC at birth. Continuous SSC is life-saving care for small/premature babies.
- SSC benefits babies and young children long after the newborn period. The more hours spent in SSC, the greater the benefit to mothers and babies. SSC helps to address many breastfeeding issues, and is a proven method to increase breastmilk supply.

Babies in SSC are synchronized with their mother, so that their temperature, heart rate, breathing, blood sugars stay stable. SSC works better than incubators or warmers, improving health, brain growth and economic outcomes into adulthood. When the baby is separated from their mother, baby burns calories and fat to exert energy, trying to stabilize. Baby's weight gain is better on SSC.

AMAZING FACT:

Mothers' body responds to her baby's needs, even providing a unique experience for each twin. Studies have shown that when holding one twin on each breast, the mother's individual breast temperature, rises or lowers to stabilize and meet the need of each baby.

SKIN-TO-SKIN IS AS EASY AS 1-2-3!

- 1** Get ready! Wear a front opening shirt or no shirt at all, and no bra. Baby should wear nothing at all, except a diaper. If the room is cool, you can cover yourselves with a blanket. Ensure baby's face is not covered and airway is unrestricted.
- 2** Get set! Place baby upright between breasts, chest-to-chest, hips flexed and arms flexed, like a little frog (see image above). Baby's cheek should rest against you, with their chin slightly extended so they can see you and they can breathe. Baby's head should be close enough for a kiss.
- 3** Get comfortable! Sit in a laid-back position on chair or bed. If sleeping together, follow safe sleep guidelines and be sure to prop yourself in a reclined position. Never prop baby on pillows.



SSC is an important tool for beginning, increasing or re-starting breastfeeding. Your baby can stay in SSC while cup feeding or drip-drop feeding as you build your milk supply. Reach out to a breastfeeding counsellor to learn more!

A safe and appropriate carrier can be used for SSC, helping your body to 'automatically' make lots of milk, while on the move! For small babies, be sure that baby's head and neck is supported, with the top of the carrier just under baby's ear, chin in 'sniff' position for open airway, while also maintaining a 'frog' and 'kissable' position.



Developed by Magdalena Whooley (PhD Health Studies, BSc Nursing, Dip HE Nursing) and Carole Dobrich (RN, BSc, IBCLC). Illustrations by Angela Eastgate, May (2020)

Evidence-Based Sources: Charpak N, Tessier R, Ruiz JG, Hernandez T, Uriza F, Villegas J, Nadeau L, Mercier C, Maheu F, Marin J, Cortes D, Gallego JM, Maldonado D (2017) Twenty-year Follow-up of Kangaroo Mother Care Versus Traditional Care Pediatrics 139 (1) e20162053. Widstrom AM, Lilja G, Aaltomaa-Michalakis P, Dahlöf A, Lintula M, Nissen E (2011) Newborn behaviour to locate the breast when skin-to-skin: a possible method for enabling early self-regulation. Acta Paediatr.100(1):79-85. World Health Organization (2008) Kangaroo Mother Care: practical guide. Ludington-Hoe S.M, Lewis T, Reese, S (2006) Breast-Infant Temperature with Twins during Shared Kangaroo Care J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs.