

# Skin-to-Skin Care for Your Newborn

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## What is skin-to-skin care?

Skin-to-skin care, or “kangaroo care,” means holding your baby closely with your bare chests touching.

**Intermountain Healthcare encourages you to hold your baby skin-to-skin right after delivery and in the hours and days following.**

## Why is skin-to-skin care important?

Mothers have probably always held their babies skin-to-skin. It’s a wonderful way to be close and has health benefits for both you and your baby.

### Benefits for your baby

Recent studies have shown that skin-to-skin care has important health benefits for babies, especially when it’s given right after delivery. For example, skin-to-skin care can:

- Calm and soothe your baby
- Help your baby maintain a healthy body temperature (it’s better than an incubator)
- Help regulate your baby’s heart rate, blood sugar, and breathing
- Improve your baby’s sleep
- Help your baby breastfeed

### Benefits for you

Skin-to-skin care is good for you, too. It can:

- Lower stress
- Help you bond and connect with your newborn
- Improve your ability to make breast milk and to know when your baby is ready to nurse



Skin-to-skin care helps your newborn adjust to life outside the womb. It’s also a wonderful way to be close.

## When can I begin skin-to-skin care?

Unless there are complications, your healthcare provider will give you a chance to hold your newborn skin-to-skin soon after delivery.

Some mothers want their babies placed on their abdomens (bellies) right away so that they can help dry the baby while the umbilical cord is being clamped and cut. Other moms will begin skin-to-skin care after their babies have been dried and weighed. You and your care team can decide together how best to begin skin-to-skin care for your newborn.

Note that preterm babies and babies taken to the NICU (Newborn Intensive Care Unit) can also benefit from skin-to-skin care. Your baby’s medical team can let you know when your baby is stable enough to be held skin-to-skin.

## How do I do skin-to-skin care?

If you've just given birth, your doctor or nurse can bring the baby to you for skin-to-skin care and will help you comfortably position and hold your baby. After that time, you and the baby's father can give skin-to-skin care whenever you choose. Here are the simple steps:

- 1 Remove your baby's clothing and remove or open your shirt. (You may want to keep your baby's diaper on.)
- 2 Place your baby on your bare chest with your baby facing in toward you.
- 3 Cover your baby's back with a blanket. Relax and enjoy.

## Should I continue skin-to-skin care once I leave the hospital?

Yes, hold your baby skin-to-skin at home. You and your baby can share this closeness any time you like. It's good for you, your baby, and your relationship as parent and child. Just remember to keep the home fairly warm and to cover your baby's back with a blanket while you snuggle.



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### Questions for my doctor

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