



## Skin-to-Skin Contact

**"Hi Mom, I'm home!"** You expect to hear those words from your child in a few years, but it also expresses their feeling immediately after birth: they want to be next to you! You have been the baby's home for all of his/her life up until now and the place of warmth, food and comfort. The best way to let the baby relax back into that comfortable, safe home with you is called "*Skin to Skin*" time. Here at Day Kimball Hospital we encourage all mother/baby couplets to enjoy skin to skin immediately or as soon as possible after delivery.

**What do you mean, "skin to skin"?** After delivery, your baby is placed bare-skinned onto your skin, usually on your chest. Any assessments or procedures that are done routinely for your baby can either be delayed for this important time together or they can be done while the baby is lying on your chest.

**Why is skin to skin a good idea?** Just a few of the many good reasons to do skin to skin are:

- ✓ *Happier baby:* Babies are comforted by being placed skin to skin with their mother right after birth. They are calmer and cry less. Being skin to skin is also pain-relieving to the baby during procedures such as an injection or heel stick.
- ✓ *Healthier baby:* When babies are placed skin to skin, they warm up better and learn to stay warm faster. Skin to skin helps the baby's respirations, heart rate and blood sugar stay normal and their oxygen levels are highest when skin to skin.
- ✓ *Happier Mother:* Being skin to skin helps to lower your stress and feel closer to the baby. This is a great time for both of you to get to know each other. The bonding that takes place during skin to skin time lasts long after birth.
- ✓ *Healthier Mother:* The movement of your baby's body on your body stimulates hormones that cause your uterus to contract and therefore bleed less.
- ✓ *Better breastfeeding:* When babies are placed undisturbed on their mother's chest, between the breasts, they often will crawl towards the mother's nipple and latch on. Babies are able to smell the colostrum in their mother's breasts. Since colostrum smells similar to amniotic fluid, babies are naturally drawn to it. In addition, babies' hand movements at the breast, as well as their sucking, cause the mother's body to release milk-making hormones. Infants who have been placed skin to skin gain weight better and breastfeed better and longer. *Babies need to be close to the breast to learn to breastfeed.*

**And the benefits continue...** Even after your first skin to skin time, continue to place your baby skin to skin over the next several days. If the baby is fussy, this will help calm him/her. If the baby is too sleepy to nurse, this will help to stimulate and arouse him to breastfeed. Skin to skin time helps the baby feel warm and comforted.

**Share the Joy** -If mom is unable to do skin to skin, dads can also hold their new baby skin to skin and both benefit greatly from it. For example, if the delivery was by cesarean section dad can be skin to skin right after the delivery. Then when mom comes out to the recovery room she can continue the bonding.



## Rooming In

At Day Kimball Hospital, we encourage mother and babies to "room in". That means that your baby stays with you in your room throughout your hospital stay. Your baby will not spend much, if any, time in the nursery. Once a day the nurses will bring your baby to the nursery to be weighed and for a few routine tests, but if you prefer those can also be done in your room.

### *Why room in?*

- It is less stressful for babies to be near their mothers. They sleep better and cry less.
- You learn to recognize your baby's feeding cues.
- Baby feeds more often
- Mother's milk comes in sooner
- Baby gains weight better
- Baby develops less jaundice
- You can get to know your baby better
- You are better prepared to take care of your baby
- Women exclusively breastfeed longer and continue to breastfeed longer.

### *What about sleep?*

- Mothers have the same amount and quality of sleep when rooming in as when the baby is out of the room.
- Get your sleep in chunks: **SLEEP WHEN YOUR BABY SLEEPS**
- The daytime is for sleeping also. Limit distractions and visitors
- It also helps to learn to nurse in a side-lying position so you can rest while baby feeds.