

# In your arms – Your baby’s favorite place

## What’s “skin-to-skin”?

Skin-to-skin means your baby will be placed belly-down, naked and not wrapped, directly on your chest, right after birth. Your baby will be dried by a health care provider and then settled on your chest. You and your baby will be covered with a blanket. Routine newborn evaluations will be performed with your baby on your chest whenever possible.

## Benefits of skin-to-skin contact

- Helps to calm you and your baby
- Your baby will have better body temperature, blood sugar, breathing, and heart rate
- Provides the normal transition place for your newborn to adjust to their new environment
- Your baby feels comfortable because your breastmilk smells familiar to your baby
- Your baby will cry less
- Your colostrum will flow more easily
- Creates strong connection between moms and babies



There are nine stages that will occur in the first hour or so after birth when your baby is placed immediately skin to skin with you. The stages are natural for your baby and ends in your baby falling asleep after his or her first breastfeeding. All mothers are encouraged to do skin to skin to ease the transition for baby after birth.

**Nine Stages of new baby behavior**  
(Windstrom 2010)

Stage	Approximate timeline	Behavior/Description
Stage 1: The Birth Cry	Immediately after birth	The birth cry helps your baby's lungs expand.
Stage 2: Relaxation	First minutes of life	Your baby will relax after the birth cry.
Stage 3: Awakening	3 minutes after birth	Your baby will make small head and shoulder movements, some mouth movements and may open his eyes.
Stage 4: Activity	8 minutes after birth	Your baby will show more mouth and sucking movements, bring her hand to her mouth and may keep her eyes open and look at your breast.
Stage 5: Rest	Throughout 1st hour	Your baby may rest between periods of activity throughout the first hour or so.
Stage 6: Crawling	35 minutes after birth	Your baby will make crawling and pushing movements towards the breast.
Stage 7: Familiarization	45 minutes after birth	Your baby will lick your nipple and touch and massage your breast. This stage may last for 20 minutes or more.
Stage 8: Suckling	1 hour after birth	Your baby will self-attach and suckle at the breast (breastfeed). This may take longer if you had any medications during your delivery.
Stage 9: Sleep	1.5 – 2 hours after birth	Your baby will probably sleep 1½ to 2 hours after his first breastfeeding.