

Skin-to-Skin: “Kangaroo Care”



ALABAMA
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HEALTH

Skin-to-skin is the practice of holding a newborn baby, wearing no more than a diaper, directly against a parent's bare chest right after birth and during the early weeks of life. It is a simple but impactful way to boost health and bonding for both baby and parent.

Benefits:

- **Physiological effects:** Assists in stabilizing the baby's heart rate, breathing, and blood sugar levels, and helps regulate the baby's temperature
- **Bonding and stress reduction:** Reduces stress for both baby and parents and promotes a stronger emotional connection
- **Promotes breastfeeding success:** Encourages natural instincts, like rooting, for the baby and helps stimulate milk production for mom



Skin-to-skin should be initiated as soon as possible after birth and should continue in the following weeks. The baby's father or another caregiver can also hold the baby skin-to-skin. It is safe and possible to have immediate skin-to-skin contact right after a cesarean section in the operating room, as long as both you and your baby are medically stable.

How to practice safely:

- Ensure the adult remains awake and alert while holding the baby skin-to-skin
- Position the baby so that their chest is resting against the parent's chest
- Carefully turn the baby's head to one side so you can see their nose and mouth clearly
- Place a warm, dry blanket over the baby's back to help keep them warm