

# Skin-to-Skin Care for Your Premature Baby

**Babies born very early usually need to stay in the neonatal intensive care unit. You can stay close to your baby by doing skin-to-skin or “kangaroo” care. Holding your baby skin-to-skin is healthy for your baby and you!**

## What is skin-to-skin or kangaroo care?

- Skin-to-skin or kangaroo care is when you hold your baby on your bare chest. Your baby will be naked, wearing only a diaper.
- Direct contact with your skin, with no clothing or blankets in the way, is what keeps your baby warm and healthy.
- You should do skin-to-skin care as much as possible while your baby is in the hospital and keep doing it at home after your baby leaves the hospital.

## Skin-to-skin can help premature babies:

- Stay warm
- Breathe and sleep better
- Feel more connected to their mothers
- Get ready for breastfeeding

## Skin-to-skin can help mothers:

- Make more breast milk
- Feel more connected to their babies
- Learn about their babies needs

## Who can do skin-to-skin care?

- Holding your premature baby in a skin-to-skin position is safe. Even the tiniest babies can do it.
- Mothers, fathers, or other caregivers can all do skin-to-skin care.
- Twins can do skin-to-skin together.
- Ask your nurse or doctor if skin-to-skin care is okay for your baby or babies.

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

- Your baby’s nurse will help you move and position your baby.
- Wearing a low-cut or button-down shirt can be helpful to make it easier to place the baby on your chest.
- Plan to spend at least 60 minutes holding your baby.
- You can use a breast pump after you finish doing skin-to-skin. Many mothers find after doing skin-to-skin they make more milk.

