



Infant- &amp; family-centred developmental care

# Very early and continuous skin-to-skin contact

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## Statement of the standard

Skin-to-skin contact between mother or father and newborn infant is initiated as early as possible and maintained continuously.



### For parents and family

- Parents are informed by healthcare professionals before birth about the importance and provision of postnatal safe skin-to-skin contact (SSC).
- Maternal SSC is provided as early and as continuously as possible.
- The father is involved to ensure continuous SSC when the mother is not able to do so.



### For healthcare professionals

- A unit guideline on SSC and early suckling is adhered to by all healthcare professionals.
- Training on safe SSC technique, including the protection of the airway, SSC transport from labour and operating rooms, early suckling and breastfeeding is attended by all responsible healthcare professionals.



### For hospital

- Training on safe SSC technique, including the protection of the airway, SSC transport from labour and operating rooms, early suckling and breastfeeding is ensured.
- Labour and operating rooms are adapted for immediate SSC by mother or family member.

## Benefits

### Short-term benefits

- Improved physiological transition to extra-uterine life
- Improved early physiological stability in preterm infants
- Increased breastfeeding rates
- Improved growth
- Improved sleep
- Facilitated parental sensitisation to their infant's needs and cues
- Improved maternal empowerment and self-efficacy
- Improved paternal empowerment and self-efficacy

### Long-term benefits

- Increased breastfeeding rates beyond infant period
- Improved parent-infant bonding and mental health
- Improved immunity, decreased re-admissions
- Reduced prematurity related morbidity in adulthood
- Improved neurodevelopmental outcome
- Improved social behaviour in early adulthood
- Reduced stress for parents
- Improved maternal outcomes associated with breastfeeding



### For neonatal unit

- A unit guideline on SSC and early suckling is available and regularly updated.
- NICU bed space and practical arrangements for SSC throughout the 24 hours by mother and father are provided.
- Starting time of SSC, and daily dose for all newborn infants are documented and monitored.



### For health service

- A national guideline on SSC and early suckling is available and regularly updated.

