

Skin to skin care provided by parents for babies in the NICU is essential:

Provides:

- Comfort and familiarity i.e. parents' voices, smell and heartbeat
- Special time for bonding with mom and dad
- Enhances mothers' breast feeding and milk supply

Benefits:

- Earlier discharge
- Vital sign stability
- Decrease in infections
- Reduced pain responses during painful procedures
- Enhances weight gain
- Enhances digestion
- Enhances breathing

Supports:

- Baby's ability to become alert and interact with their parents
- Oral feedings achieved sooner
- Improved sleep and sleep patterns
- Baby's development and their ability to achieve significant milestones

Why does it work?

- 1) Familiarity of parent's body provides warmth and provides a buffer for environmental input and the unfamiliar NICU environment.
- 2) Comforts and helps infant cope with health issues.
- 3) Offers a familiar and supportive environment for trying new things like feeding and interacting with parents.

Skin-to-skin care practices for infants in NICU's provide significant support for infant development, physiologic stability, behavioral organization, and positive attachment relationships.

