

# Information to parents about skin-to-skin contact in the NICU



Ragnild Maastrup RN, IBCLC

Knowledge Centre for Breastfeeding Infants with Special Needs, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark

## Skin-to-skin contact in the NICU



Most babies admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit are able to be skin-to-skin with their parents. Some babies can be too fragile for a while to overcome the transfer from incubator/bed to their mother or father.



**Lying skin-to-skin is when the baby – only wearing a diaper – lies on the mother or father’s chest.**

It is preferable for the baby to lie skin-to-skin for at least 2 hours or more. Rather more than half of the day. Ideally, 24 hours a day is preferable.



Skin-to-skin contact is good for the baby’s development and growth. The baby will become calmer and more comfortable.



Skin-to-skin contact can give the mother more breast milk and the baby will be more inclined to learn to breastfeed.



Skin-to-skin contact “prolongs” the pregnancy and is a good transition from the womb to the world outside. The parents will become specialists in understanding their infant’s signals and they will read all the infant’s hunger cues. Bonding between the parents and the infant will occur easier.



At the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark, we are making efforts to enhance the length and frequency of skin-to-skin contact with all admitted neonates – the premature infants and the extremely low birth weight infants, as well as ill newborns born at term.

Among other things, we made this pamphlet for parents to support the oral information.

