

# Five ways you can protect your baby

<b>SKIN TO SKIN CONTACT</b>	Skin to skin contact protects your baby against infection as baby will be covered with good bacteria from your skin. This good bacteria is special and unique to you and very protective for your baby. This good bacteria transfers via breastmilk too, so skin to skin contact is even more important if mother is not breastfeeding to ensure baby receives this early protection. It also helps babies to adjust better to life outside the womb, it stimulates digestion, regulates temperature, breathing and heart-rate and relaxes both mother and baby. Babies enjoy skin contact as soon as possible after birth, for as long as mother wishes and until after the first feed. Babies and parents can enjoy skin to skin contact at anytime to provide comfort and support feeding.
<b>COLOSTRUM</b>	Colostrum is the first milk that your body makes for your baby. It protects against infections and acts like your baby's first immunisation. Colostrum contains antibodies to develop your baby's immune system. It also contains Vitamin A which protects your baby's eyes. It is recommended that all babies receive colostrum either by breastfeeding or by expressing (it can be dripped into your baby's mouth).
<b>HAND WASHING</b>	Infections are caused by bacteria or viruses. You can reduce the risk by washing your hands well for 20 seconds regularly with soap and hot water, particularly if you have been changing nappies, or work with or care for small children. You can also reduce the risk by not sharing utensils.
<b>WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE</b>	Whooping cough is a serious infection which causes long bouts of coughing and breathlessness. If you are vaccinated in pregnancy (after 16 weeks gestation) the immunity you receive will be passed to your baby through your placenta. It is highly effective at protecting your baby in their first few weeks of life prior routine immunisations at two months of age.
<b>VITAMIN K</b>	Vitamin K helps blood to clot which reduces bleeding. Babies have low stores of Vitamin K which may put some babies at higher risk of bleeding. This is rare but can be serious. This can be prevented by giving your baby extra Vitamin K after birth. Ask your Midwife for more information.