

Choosing skin to skin with your baby

It is evident that skin to skin contact is beneficial to all mothers and babies.

Midwives will support you with skin to skin contact in theatre, during recovery and afterwards on the ward, for as long as you wish. However, we cannot continue skin to skin contact during transfer from theatre table to bed, but it will be re-started as soon as is possible.

Although we aim to facilitate Skin to Skin Caesarean births, sometimes situations may arise where this is not possible. This may be due to a clinical emergency for mother or baby, in which safety is the priority. In this instance, we will aim to bring your baby back to you as soon as possible.

If you have any further questions, please refer to your Obstetrician or Midwife for more information and guidance.



Skin to Skin Caesarean Birth

Information for new parents and families



What is a Caesarean birth?

A Caesarean Section (C/S) is a procedure to deliver a baby by a surgical operation.

Your Obstetrician (surgeon who specialises in childbirth) has recommended that you have your baby delivered by caesarean section and will discuss this with you throughout your pregnancy. However, it is your decision to go ahead with the operation or not and this is also a conversation to have with your Obstetrician.

Why do I need to have a Caesarean?

The most common reasons why a caesarean section may be recommended are:

- Position of your baby
- Your baby has slow growth or is in distress
- There are concerns about your placenta
- You have had a caesarean section before
- You are having more than one baby
- Your medical or previous birth history may indicate a caesarean section is preferable

Anxieties when having a Caesarean birth

Evidence suggests some women can feel detached from the birth of their baby when they have a caesarean section birth. If a caesarean section is felt to be the safest way to give birth for either the mother and or baby, East Lancashire Hospital NHS Trust aim to reduce the chance of this happening.

We aim to achieve this by adopting a practice of Skin to Skin Caesarean Births.

What is a 'Skin to Skin Caesarean Birth'?

A Skin to Skin Caesarean Birth facilitates immediate skin to skin contact between mother and baby - the surgeon will place the baby directly onto the mothers chest. Immediate, prolonged and recurrent skin to skin contact carries lots of benefits for both mother and baby.

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To facilitate this, we leave the drapes down until the baby is born and the cord has been cut (usually after delayed clamping).

Removing the drapes allows you to see your baby being born and we will support your head to do so. Please don't be alarmed by this, your tummy will block your view of the surgery.

After the birth we replace the drapes between you and the operation to maintain sterility.

Some women will not wish the drapes to be down, you can still have skin to skin contact if this is your preference. After the surgeon has cut the cord, the midwife will place your baby onto your chest.



Benefits of Skin to Skin contact include:

- Mother and baby both release Oxytocin during Skin to Skin contact; Oxytocin is a hormone that helps to relax and calm you both, promotes bonding and breast milk production and enhances brain development in your baby.
- Keeps your baby warm.
- Regulates your baby's heart and breathing rate and oxygen levels.
- Develops your baby's immune system.
- Helps your baby to have the first and subsequent breastfeeds, if you wish.

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