



# How to Get Help

If you have questions or need help with feedings, be sure to ask your nurse. She will be happy to assist you. If you are breastfeeding, the lactation consultants will also make a visit to your room each day to see how things are going.

After discharge from the hospital you can continue to receive breastfeeding support through the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital Baby Café and Breastfeeding Support Center.

**Breastfeeding Support Center  
Melrose-Wakefield Hospital  
585 Lebanon Street  
Melrose, MA 02176  
781-979-MILK (6455)**

*The first hour of life is an important and exciting time for a new family! Reviewing this information will help you to understand the importance of skin-to-skin contact within this time period. Should you choose to breastfeed your baby, this is the best way to ensure a successful start. It is our hope at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, that we can help your new family have a smooth and gratifying first hour.*

## Skin-to-Skin Contact

Skin-to-skin contact is simply any time a mother and baby are next to each other without any clothing (except a diaper) between them. This generally happens right after birth, but can take place any time. A warm blanket is usually placed over both mom and baby during skin-to-skin time.



**Melrose-Wakefield Hospital**  
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Hallmark Health System is the premier, charitable provider of vital health services to Boston's northern communities. The system includes Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford; Melrose Wakefield Hospital, Melrose; Hallmark Health Cancer Center, Stoneham; The CHEM Center for MRI, Stoneham; Hallmark Health Medical Center, Reading; Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice, Malden; Lawrence Memorial/Regis College Nursing and Radiography Programs, Medford and Ell Pond Medical Associates. Hallmark Health is affiliated with Massachusetts General Hospital for cardiology and Tufts Medical Center for neonatology.

# Welcoming Baby Gently



*The first hour of life*



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## Information for Parents

**What to do:** Place your baby skin-to-skin immediately after he or she is cleaned and examined by nursing staff, and keep him or her there for at least 30 minutes in the first hour.

**What to know:** Your baby is coming from the warm comfortable environment that you provided, into a cool, bright room where he or she will be rubbed and examined. When the baby is placed skin-to-skin with you, it's like being placed back to the warm, safe environment he or she was used to.

**What to do:** Talk to your baby in a soothing voice. You may also assist your baby to the breast during this time.

**What to know:** Initially after birth, your baby will be alert. This is a great time for you and your baby to bond. Your baby's eyes will be open and looking at you. Your baby will be listening for your voice. During this alert stage your baby can learn to latch on and breastfeed.

**What to do:** Allow your baby to be skin-to-skin right after delivery. This will allow your baby to move across your body to your breast, where he or she will be able to latch on and breastfeed.

**What to know:** Babies are able to seek out the nipple and latch during the first hour. It is a natural adaptation into the world.

## Especially for Dads

As the baby's father, you have a very important role in the early hours and days.

You can:

- Let the nurses know that you and the baby's mother have decided that keeping the baby close after birth is important to you.
- Ask about helping with some of the routine procedures, such as diaper changing.
- Ask visitors to wait at least an hour after the birth to visit, and to keep visits short.
- Give mom and baby lots of support.
- Help mom keep track of feedings and diaper changes.
- Help mom by providing easy to grab food, like sandwiches and snacks. Keeping mom fed, helps to keep baby fed.
- Enjoy your new baby! Cuddle and talk to your baby so he or she gets to know you.

### A Special Message For Grandparents

**Congratulations! What a special time for you as you support your son or daughter through this wonderful event. You play an important role for the new parents. Your positive words and encouragement of early skin-to-skin contact help to give your grandchild the best possible start in life.**

## Information for Family Members

**What to do:** Allow the parents to be alone with the baby in the first hour following birth.

**What to know:** The first hour after birth, a baby's senses are heightened. He or she is alert and eager to bond with parents.

**What to do:** Support mom's decision to breastfeed and give her privacy in the early hours and days.

**What to know:** Some moms may be uncomfortable asking for privacy when beginning breastfeeding.

**What to do:** Allow mom to keep baby skin-to-skin without interruption in the first hour of life.

**What to know:** Skin-to-skin contact helps the newborn to maintain body temperature

**What to do:** Educate other family members about the importance of the first hour and first feedings.

**What to know:** For breastfeeding moms and babies, the first hour is very important. Early feedings lead to a better nursing experience. Baby gets the very first milk (colostrum) which is full of antibodies, helping baby to avoid infections. Early feedings also cause mom's uterus to contract which minimizes blood loss.

**What to do:** Respect mom's need for rest. Ask friends and family members to give parents at least one hour alone with the baby after birth and lots of privacy in the first days. Keep hospital visits short. Offer help with meals and errands. Give parents lots of love and support!

**What to know:** Mom will likely be very tired after giving birth! She will be experiencing hormonal changes, lack of sleep, and all the responsibilities of becoming a new parent.