

## HOLD ME HEART-TO-HEART

All babies need to be held close to your heart. It's called skin-to-skin. Skin-to-skin means baby is undressed or only in a diaper and held on the bare chest of mom, dad, grandmother or other caregiver.

### Hold your baby skin-to-skin:

- In the hospital – full term babies right away or when preterm or special care babies are ready.
- At home during the first few months.



### Why Skin-to-Skin?

- Babies are warmer.
- Babies are calmer and less likely to cry.
- Babies have better heart rates and blood sugar levels.
- Babies self-attach to mom's breast better.
- Babies have better brain development.
- Mom's milk supply increases sooner.
- Mom feels calmer and less stress too.
- Dad or other family members can hold and bond with baby through skin-to-skin holding too!

### Holding Baby Skin-to-Skin

- Wear a shirt that opens in the front and move your clothing away from your chest and tummy.
- Put your baby, dressed only in a diaper, onto your chest.
- Place a blanket over your baby with his/her head uncovered.

## In the Hospital:

- Tell your doctor you would like to hold your baby skin-to-skin right after he/she is born.
- If medical reasons keep you and baby apart right after birth, unwrap him/her and cuddle shortly after birth.
- If you have a c-section, ask to be with your baby cheek to cheek in the operating room.

The first hours of snuggling skin-to-skin help you and your baby to get to know each other. Your baby hears your heartbeat and feels safe and secure against your chest. It's the perfect 'first hug' for you and your baby.

## Special Care Nursery

- Ask the doctor or nurse when you can start holding your baby skin-to-skin.
- Ask for help to move your baby to your chest if he/she has tubes and wires attached.
- You are a very important part of your baby's special care.



After your baby comes home, keep holding him/her skin-to-skin while you are in a sitting position. If you are on medications or anything that might affect your ability to stay awake when holding your baby, be sure someone else can help you care for him/her and hold him/her skin-to-skin.

## At Home:

Skin-to-skin can be very helpful when:

- Baby is fussy.
- You want to cuddle and be close to your baby.
- You are having trouble latching your baby or keeping up your milk supply. When he/she searches for the breast, help move her to your breast.
- You are feeling stressed and want to relax.

