



# Skin-to-skin and microbiome formation

**Skin-to-skin at birth strengthens the baby's skin barrier by transferring protective, beneficial maternal bacteria to the baby forming its microbiome. It protects against infection by colonising the newborn's skin with mom's healthy microorganisms. Newborns have fragile skin so it is important to keep the skin healthy and intact to form a functional barrier. So don't bath babies for the first few days after birth.**

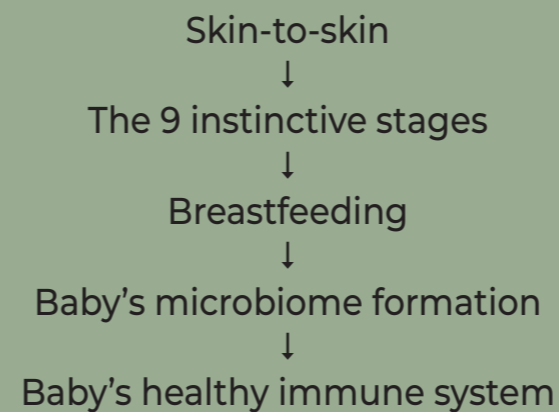
**TOUCH** – Touch is one of the first senses to develop and therefore skin-to-skin with baby is important to give comfort and security. It also induces relaxation and reduces the stress hormone cortisol through the release of oxytocin – the love hormone. Oxytocin is an important hormone for bonding and triggers key emotional centres to be highlighted in the brain of both mother and baby. Touch also means that the baby is colonised with friendly bacteria from mom and dad's skin giving protection from infection. Oxytocin is also important to stimulate digestion and breastmilk production and ejection.

## Benefits to skin barrier and immune system

- ◆ **Microbiome transfer:** Skin-to-skin introduces the baby to “friendly” bacteria from the mother’s skin, forming a protective barrier that reduces the risk of infection.
- ◆ **Reduced infection risk:** This early exposure helps fight against pathogens by creating a healthy, diverse microbiome.
- ◆ **Warmth and protection:** Skin-to-skin stabilises the infant’s temperature, which supports skin integrity.



## Skin-to-skin for all moms and babies leading to a healthy microbiome



The skin is the largest organ in the body so it is an important area to keep healthy. Observe a good skin routine to keep baby's skin healthy and intact

- ◆ Cleansing
- ◆ Moisturising
- ◆ Barrier
- ◆ Sun protection

