



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

Feb 2022 CCSS: Challenges in Women's and Infants' Health

S07: Combating Newborn Pain Utilizing Skin to Skin Contact and Breastfeeding: What Does the Evidence Say?

Resource List

[The World Health Organization \(2021\)](#) published new research that highlights risks of separating newborns from mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring newborn babies have close contact with parents after birth, especially for premature babies, will lower their risk of death and lifelong health complications. Prominent medical professionals and leaders across the world have added commentary to the importance of improving quality of care services for mothers and newborns by incorporating skin to skin interventions. Review additional information that addresses post COVID -19 recommendations by returning to this site.

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(2020\)](#) informed our nation's citizens that the events that occur during a hospital birth can have lasting effects on the infant. The CDC created a factsheet listing several supportive hospital practices, birth facility policies and practices that improve breastfeeding outcomes. A brief list can be reviewed and incorporated in your patient care right away!

[The American Psychological Association \(2017\)](#) measured the affective states of parent-child interactions through the use of fMRI data acquired from mothers and fathers interactions with their newborns up to the age of two years old. Of particular importance, newborns who experience skin to skin contact were shown to not only promote greater respiratory, temperature and glucose stability, but also reduce crying which is a positive stress response. This article cites additional research supporting the physiological and emotional benefits of skin to skin contact.

[The United Nations Children's Fund \(2013\)](#) with support from the World Health Organization launched an international "Baby Friendly" initiative that enables public services to support infants and offer them the best possible start in life. This landmark report highlighted the evidence and rationale to implement "baby friendly" standards in maternal and infant care. This UK based model of support services are endorsed by WHO and therefore able to spread these vital interventions across the globe. Learn more about the evidence-based processes for improving maternity units and health visiting services for mothers and infants by visiting this site.



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References

American Psychological Association. (2017). Parent-child interactions. *Particularly Exciting Experiments in Psychology*. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/highlights/peeps/issue-98>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Maternity practices in infant nutrition and care (mPINC). <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/mpinc/maternity-care-practices.htm>

United Nations Children's Fund. (2013). The evidence and rationale for the UNICEF UK baby friendly initiative standards. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/about/evidence-and-rationale-for-the-baby-friendly-standards/>

World Health Organization. (2021). Keeping mothers and babies together could save more than 125,000 lives. *News Release*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-03-2021-new-research-highlights-risks-of-separating-newborns-from-mothers-during-covid-19-pandemic>