

Influence of Immediate Skin-to-Skin Contact During Cesarean Surgery on Rate of Transfer of Newborns to NICU for Observation

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SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT is defined as placing a naked newborn on a mother's bare chest immediately after birth (World Health Organization & UNICEF, 2009). Skin-to-skin contact should begin immediately after birth and continue uninterrupted for at least 1 hour for all women or until the first feeding for breastfeeding women (World Health Organization & UNICEF, 2009). All routine care can be performed during skin-to-skin contact. Research has shown improved maternal and newborn outcomes related to immediate skin-to-skin contact (Haxton, Doering, Gingras, & Kelly, 2012; Moore, Anderson, Bergman, & Dowswell, 2012). However, most outcomes studies are based on the vaginal birth population. Few studies have examined the physiologic outcomes of immediate skin-to-skin contact after cesarean birth (Stevens, Schmied, Burns, & Dahlen, 2014). To our knowledge, no evidence described the influence of immediate skin-to-skin contact that begins during cesarean surgery and its influence on the proportion of infants transferred to a NICU for observation immediately after birth. We conducted an evidence-based practice project to determine if skin-to-skin contact that began during cesarean surgery influenced the proportion of newborns transferred to the NICU for observation.

Abstract: We conducted an evidence-based practice project to determine if skin-to-skin contact immediately after cesarean birth influenced the rate of transfer of newborns to the NICU for observation. We analyzed data for 5 years (2011 through 2015) and compared the rates for the period before implementation of skin-to-skin contact with rates for the period after. The proportion of newborns transferred to the NICU for observation was significantly different and lower after implementing skin-to-skin contact immediately after cesarean birth (Pearson's $\chi^2 = 32.004$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). These results add to the growing body of literature supporting immediate, uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact for all mother-newborn pairs, regardless of birth mode.
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Keywords: cesarean | cesarean surgery | evidence-based practice | NICU observations | skin-to-skin contact



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