

# Immediate skin-to-skin contact beneficial in very preterm birth setting

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Immediate parent skin-to-skin contact (SSC) after very preterm birth is beneficial for the mother-infant relationship, according to a study published online Nov. 30 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Siri Lilliesköld, R.N., from the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, and colleagues examined the effect of immediate SSC at birth for very preterm [infants](#) on mother-infant interaction quality at 4 months of corrected age in a secondary analysis of data from a [randomized clinical trial](#). Seventy-one infants and 56 mothers were included in the analysis; 37 infants were allocated to standard care and 34 to SSC with either parent after birth.

The researchers found that fathers provided more SSC than mothers during the first six hours after birth, with a median of 3.25 and 0.75 hours, respectively. There was a significant difference observed in one of five Parent-Child Early Relational Assessment subscales (subscale 3: infant positive affect, communicative and [social skills](#)); higher quality mother-infant interaction was seen in the SSC group at 4 months (Cohen  $d = 0.67$ ). When adjusting for primiparity, child sex, and observational setting, this effect remained significant.

"These findings support the existence of a sensitive period after very preterm birth, during which close contact between parent and infant may induce a long-term positive effect on the parent-infant relationship," the authors write.

**More information:** Siri Lilliesköld et al, Skin-to-Skin Contact at Birth for Very Preterm Infants and Mother-Infant Interaction Quality at 4 Months, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.44469](#)

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