



Skin to skin is about women wanting to hold their newborns that they have nurtured and grown inside their bodies. It is about feminism, valuing a woman's role as a mother and it's about love.

It's also about quality care, safety, compassion and making a difference as well as the immense health benefits that close contact can bring to both members of the dyad.

### My skin to skin story - By Jenny Clarke

Courage and compassion forced me to take action and to write on the theatre wall above the WHO checklist board.

This committed rebellious act happened because of a lack of appreciation of the vital need for skin to skin between babies and mothers in the operating theatre

I wrote

**"IS THE BABY IN SKIN TO SKIN CONTACT?"**

As a direct result "Skin to Skin" is now printed onto the WHO checklist board in the operating theatre

This act, alongside the use of social media, has resulted in an increased awareness and better practice at my own and other numerous NHS Trusts. Skin to skin rates in theatre are rising.

Skin to Skin  
Is a basic human right  
It should always be considered  
and discussed  
For all types of birth  
All mothers want to hold their baby/babies

**LOVE**

### WHO 2014

- Skin-to-skin contact immediately after delivery reduces crying, improves mother to infant interaction, keeps baby warm, and allows mothers to breastfeed successfully.
- Temperature, heart rate and breathing are more stable.
- Babies also have lower levels of cortisol. Bacteria are established on the newborns skin from the mother which reduces incidence of infection.
- Women who hold their baby skin-to-skin have more confidence in parenting skills, and usually recognize and respond to their infant's needs sooner than mothers who are separated from baby following delivery.

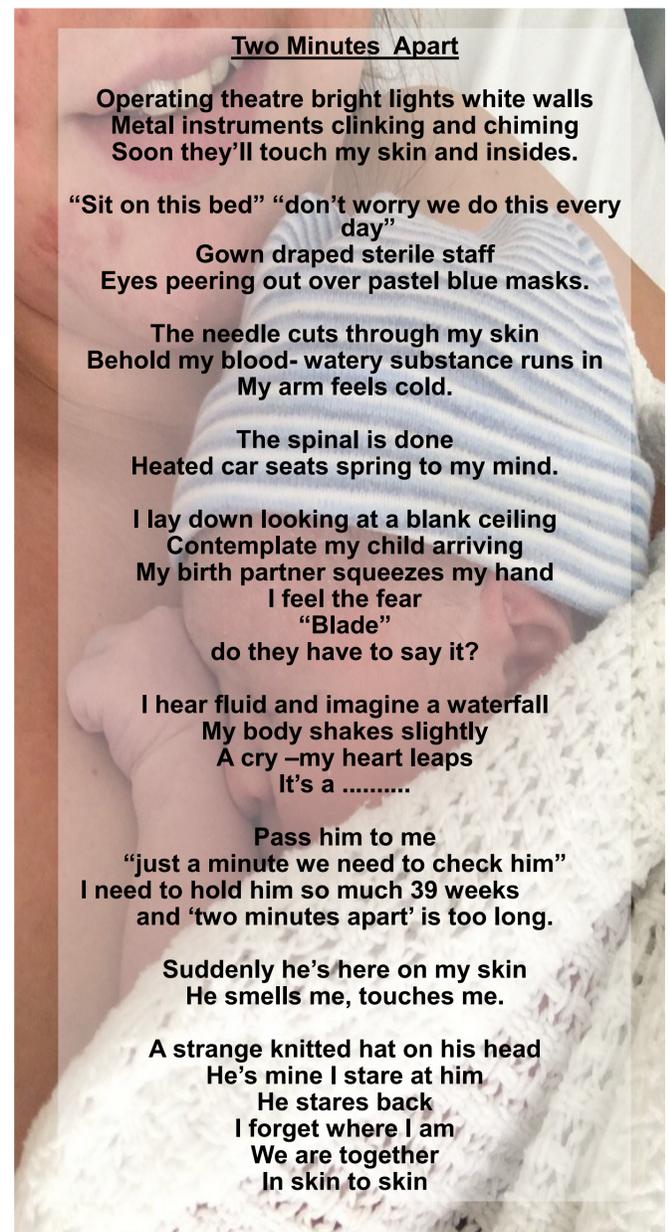


**MIDWIVES must consider the 6Cs to ensure that skin to skin contact is always an integral part of women's experience of birth in any situation**



Skin-to-skin contact (SSC) describes the placement of a naked infant, occasionally with a nappy or a cap on, on the mothers bare skin, and the exposed side/back of the infant covered by blankets or towels (UNICEF 2011). The term kangaroo care (KC) is generally discussed in relation to SSC with premature infants and care provided in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (UNICEF 2010).

"Immediate or early skin-to-skin contact after a Caesarean section: a review of the literature." J Stevens et al. © 2014 John Wiley & Sons Ltd Maternal and Child Nutrition (2014), 10, pp. 456-473



### Two Minutes Apart

Operating theatre bright lights white walls  
Metal instruments clinking and chiming  
Soon they'll touch my skin and insides.

"Sit on this bed" "don't worry we do this every day"

Gown draped sterile staff  
Eyes peering out over pastel blue masks.

The needle cuts through my skin  
Behold my blood- watery substance runs in  
My arm feels cold.

The spinal is done  
Heated car seats spring to my mind.

I lay down looking at a blank ceiling  
Contemplate my child arriving  
My birth partner squeezes my hand

I feel the fear  
"Blade"  
do they have to say it?

I hear fluid and imagine a waterfall  
My body shakes slightly  
A cry -my heart leaps  
It's a .....

Pass him to me  
"just a minute we need to check him"  
I need to hold him so much 39 weeks  
and 'two minutes apart' is too long.

Suddenly he's here on my skin  
He smells me, touches me.

A strange knitted hat on his head  
He's mine I stare at him  
He stares back  
I forget where I am  
We are together  
In skin to skin

