

STEP 7: Practice rooming-in - allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.

Recommendations

Ensure that your facility has a formal policy on rooming-in of mothers and infants 24 hours a day as the standard care for healthy, full-term infants regardless of feeding choice.

Ensure that this policy and your facility's staff both encourage and allow mothers and babies to stay together in their room immediately after birth and throughout their entire hospital stay, with the possible exception of one hour per day for medical procedures or if separation is medically indicated.

Encourage and allow mothers who have had Caesarean sections and/or other procedures (including those with general anesthesia) to stay together with their babies and/or start rooming-in as soon as they are able to respond to their babies' needs.

In the setting of a mother who requests that her infant be cared for in the nursery, ensure that staff:

- explore reasons for this request with the mother, regardless of her feeding choice
- address the maternal concerns raised
- provide education on the advantages of having her infant stay with her in the same room 24 hours a day (e.g., earlier identification of and response to infant feeding and stress cues, infant calmer, earlier lactogenesis)
- help mother decide what is most suitable in her situation
- document informed decision in the infant's medical record

Perform routine procedures in the room with the family, at the mothers' bedside whenever possible in order to avoid mother/baby separation and allow the mother to help calm her infant. Encourage and allow mothers to hold their infants in skin-to-skin contact during medical procedures to help alleviate pain. Encourage and allow mothers to breastfeed their infant during medical procedures, whenever possible, to further help alleviate pain.

If separation of the infant from the mother is required for medical reasons, allow the mother to have access to calm and feed her baby at any time, as long as the infant is medically stable to do so.

