

the first magical hour

When a baby is peaceful and in skin-to-skin contact with his mum after he's born, he will go through a series of behaviours, as shown here. Some people call this the magical hour.

This is a natural process and babies should be allowed time to work through the stages as it helps to get breastfeeding off to a good start. Many babies take up to an hour and a half to complete this.

1 A short birth cry

The baby starts to relax and rest



2 Waking up



Oxytocin – sometimes called the 'love' or 'feel-good' hormone – is produced during skin-to-skin and breastfeeding. It has a calming and relaxing effect on you as a mum.

Skin-to-skin also releases hormones that tell your body to start to produce breast milk and it stimulates your baby's instinct to look for your breast and his first feed.

3 Being active – looking at his mum's breast, opening his mouth, putting a hand in his mouth and making sounds



4 Resting

This might be a short or long rest



5 Familiarisation – crawling towards his mum's nipple, licking/nuzzling and getting ready to breastfeed – this can take half an hour or more



Left unhurried, your baby is capable of finding your breast and having his first breastfeed in the first hour or so of his life! Leaving him in skin-to-skin contact will help him do this.

6 Attaching and having a feed



7 Sleeping

