Family-centred care at the top of the agenda at Bliss

Bliss
for babies born too soon, too small, too sick

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Special care baby charity Bliss is working towards providing greater awareness around family-centred care and parent involvement through our publications and activity in 2011.

Bliss and the Winnicott Foundation recently published a new family-centred care booklet 'Skin-to-skin with your premature baby' to aid parents with bonding with their premature or sick baby.

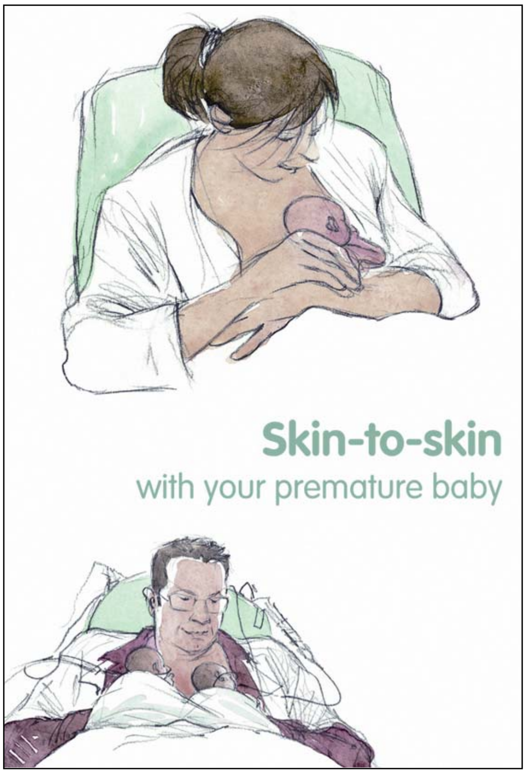
Each neonatal unit around the UK will have received copies of the booklet but more copies can be ordered by calling 01933 318503, emailing enquiries@bliss.org.uk or visiting www.bliss.org.uk

The leaflet is well illustrated and contains inspiring quotes from parents as well as the benefits of skin-to-skin and helpful tips to make skin-to-skin a comfortable and positive experience for both parents and babies. It also contains a comprehensive Q and A to help parents decide if it is something they want to try. This is a useful resource for staff and will aid them in helping to explain the benefits of skin-to-skin at a time when parents can feel overwhelmed with information.

The newly revised 'Bliss Community Health Professionals Information Guide' (to be launched in May 2011) is designed to ensure that community health professionals have access to the information they need to provide appropriate support to families. Originally published in 2004, it was developed to provide health visitors with the information necessary to provide effective support to families of premature and sick babies following discharge from hospital. The new edition adopts a family-centred care philosophy and features parent stories, case studies, quotes and new evidence-based research tailored directly to the information needs of community health professionals.

Most health visitors do not currently receive specific training on the care of premature and sick babies (and their families) on a regular or ongoing basis, however the responsibility for providing care for the baby once discharged from hospital rests on the parents who need to be assisted by health visitors. As hospitals seek to release children into the care of their parents earlier, the development of high levels of specialist knowledge among health visitors and community practitioners becomes ever more important.

Look out for the new version of the Bliss information guide for parents which will be available in May. It will have updated content and a greater focus on family-centred care. The language used in the guide is being reviewed and will focus on the experience of the family as a whole. It will contain case study stories for parents to identify with as well as the usual helpful information in the current version.



Bliss was recently awarded a grant from the Department of Health to ensure that neonatal staff are able to better support babies with palliative care needs. The majority of these babies are currently cared for on the neonatal unit, but it is important to recognise that there are other options – transfer to a hospice or even to the family home. Neonatal units now appreciate that they need to be equipped to offer families the choice. The Association for Children's Palliative Care (ACT) has produced a neonatal pathway for babies with palliative care needs. Bliss is working in partnership with ACT, the General Medical Council (GMC) and Children's Hospices UK (CHUK) to run a capacity building programme focusing on this pathway. We have provided a series of free study days for neonatal staff around some of the issues that they may face in providing palliative care. This is now being followed up by a quality improvement programme which is focusing on improving practice in palliative care on a neonatal unit.