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

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

6. Attaching and having a feed

7. Sleeping

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.

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.

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.