

# Keeping In Touch



This need to "keep in touch" means that families belong together, and preferably nursing, from birth. A process of "bonding" in which attachment occurs between mother, father and infant is greatly facilitated when babies are not separated from their parents after birth. Marshall H. Klaus M.D. and John H. Kennell M.D. (authors of *Maternal Infant Bonding*) advocate a period of approximately 30-45 minutes

immediately after birth for mother, father and baby to be together alone and without interruptions. This initial contact serves to strengthen the bonds of intimate familial relationships.

The success of breastfeeding, which virtually guarantees skin contact, may also depend on being together early. Research at the Medical Psychology Unit at Cambridge, England led to the conclusion that separation of mother and baby soon after birth is a major influential factor in the ultimate success or failure of a particular breastfeeding relationship.

The sucking reflex is at its height 20-30 minutes after birth. If the infant is not fed then, the reflex diminishes rapidly only to reappear 40 hours later. On the other hand, if the infant is put to breast within half-an-hour after birth and every three hours or oftener thereafter, it takes the breast well and early physiologic weight loss is prevented.

Perinatologists have concluded that close contact may be as important to the mother's well-being as to the child's. Separation immediately after birth may foster a mothering disaffection that is reflected in ineptness, overprotectiveness, failure-to-thrive syndrome, or even battering. There appears to be a sensitive period for attachment in the mother.

These early hours after birth represent a sensitive, but not critical, period, Dr. Klaus explains. Human beings have a tremendous capacity for adaptation. Bonding and breastfeeding may be easier without separation after birth, but whatever the birth experience, nursing or at least body contact should commence as soon as possible.

A baby has a critical need to be caressed, cuddled, held, or just carried by the mother. Selma Fraiberg, author of *How A Baby Learns to Love*, says that body intimacy centers around the mother's breast. A baby's physical needs for food and health are met when nourished with mother's milk. More importantly the child's emotional needs are nurtured at the mother's breast. No other act so effectively insures skin-to-skin keeping in touch.

One of the best opportunities for body contact is found when a mother breastfeeds in bed while sleeping with her infant. The baby can nurse on and off to heart's content fulfilling his sucking needs while the mother sleeps. It's quiet, cozy and the mother won't be interrupted. There is no danger to the baby in this practice; seventy per cent of successful breastfeeding mothers take their babies to bed with them. Touch is maintained even at night.

The current of love flows from mother to baby and back through skin contact. "In the main, when a baby and his mother are united through an extended nursing period it will most often lead to a strong attachment," Fraiberg said. The work of Bowlby establishes clearly that where the mother/child bond is encouraged to develop normally and completely, the capacity of the child to form additional bonds is enhanced. In fact, the ability of the child to make other loving attachments is patterned on the quality of the mother/child bond. The love-starved infant, the infant forced to endure frequent separations from mother, is more likely to become the shallow, disloyal adult. Fathers, if they make themselves available to their children, clearly profit first and foremost when the baby is ready to form additional bonds. Montagu states that "What is established in the breastfeeding relationship constitutes the foundation for the development of all human social relationships, and the communications the infant receives through the warmth of the mother's skin constitutes the first of the socializing experiences of his life."



by Marcy Mauler

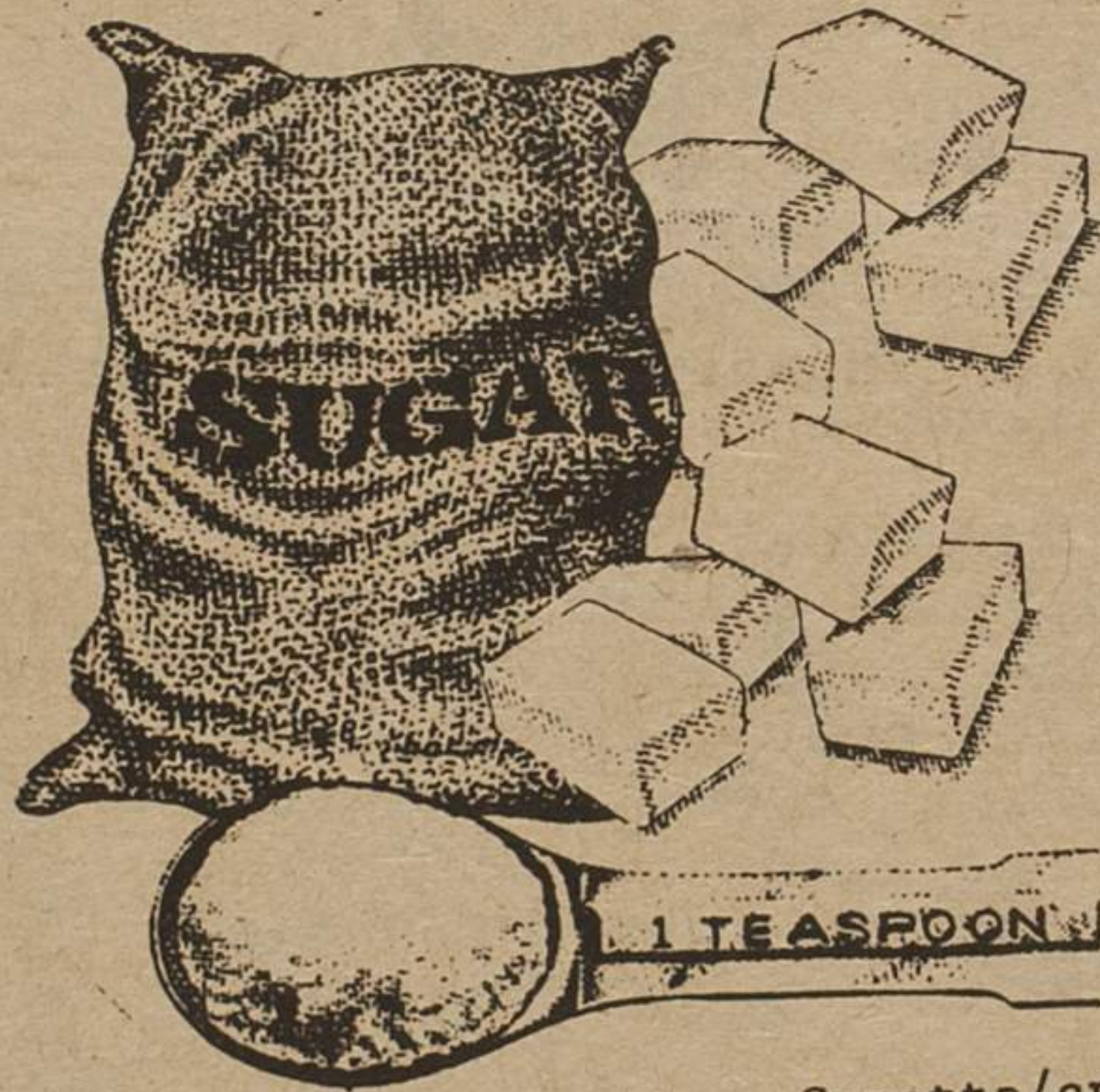
According to Ashley Montagu in his book *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, the sense of touch, which he calls the "mother of the senses," is the earliest sense to develop in the human embryo. A baby spends nine months in utero in constant touch with the warmth, security and stimulus of his mother's body. Birth is a radical change. To soften that change, a baby still needs to keep in touch, and Montagu notes, the child needs to receive much skin stimulation from the mother in order to survive physically and emotionally.

## book review

Taken from "The Communicator" May-June 1978

Ira L. Shannon, *Brand Name Guide to Sugar: Sucrose Content of Over 1,000 Common Foods and Beverages* (Nelson Hall, 1977).

The *Brand Name Guide to Sugar* is a book whose appearance is long overdue. With increasing evidence that excess sugar leads to disease, and that it is a hidden ingredient in most processed foods, some sort of handbook has been necessary. This book provides it, with tables listing the percentage of sucrose in over 1,000 foods and beverages.



Mt. Adams Gazette/cpf

The author's introduction documents why and how the research for the book was undertaken. Recognizing that "there is absolutely no requirement for any sucrose at all in our daily diets," he details what the American love of sugar (which totals on the average of 125 lbs. for each individual annually) has done to the nation's health. There are four distinct effects: obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and tooth decay, and he quotes the relevant research to back up his claims.

The remainder and major portion of the book lists the sucrose levels of 1,052 food and drink items. They include 26 conventional soft drinks, 79 dry breakfast cereals, 39 fresh fruits and vegetables, and 30 chewable tablets and vitamin drops, among many other categories.

As a reference work for the shopper, it should prove invaluable. And it contains temperate, well-founded advice: "We don't advocate total elimination of sugar from the diet. However, we do urge moderation, perhaps limiting sucrose intake to foods and drinks containing less than 10% sucrose." With his book at hand, it will not be hard to discover what foods those are.

The Community Mercantile now stocks *Brand Name Guide to Sugar* as well as other food-related books and cookbooks. Check out our selection!

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