



Caring for Your Baby

Cleaning

How do I wash my baby?

- Tub bathing is recommended even when the umbilical cord is attached. This helps with decreased heat loss and makes sure the umbilical cord does not get infected.
- Do not bathe baby every day as it dries the skin and can lead to increased irritation. Bathing baby every 2-3 days is recommended.
- Bathe baby 2 hours **after** a feeding or just before the next feeding.
- Arrange all your needed supplies within easy reach before you start the bath: wash cloth soap/body wash, and a few towels.
- Use a mild, unscented, and hypoallergenic soap or body wash.
- The bath water should feel warm to your elbow or inner wrist.
- Never turn your back or leave your baby alone during the bath, not even for a second.
- Always keep at least one hand on your baby when in the bath or on the table.
- Do the bath in a warm room (about 22 to 27°C), free of drafts.
- When washing your baby, think cleanest to dirtiest.

FACE: Gently wipe the baby's face with a clean wet washcloth **without** soap.

EYES: Using the same cloth with no soap you used for your baby's face, and wipe your baby's eyes from the inner corner, moving outwards using a different part of the washcloth.

EARS: Wipe outer part of ears and behind the ears with the tip of the washcloth. Never use Q-tips inside baby's ears.

HAIR: You can wash baby's hair in the tub or wrap the baby in a warm towel and wash the hair before washing the body. Lather baby's hair using a very small amount of mild soap or shampoo. Rinse your baby's hair thoroughly and rub dry. Make sure to gently place your fingers over the opening in your baby's ears to prevent water from going inside the ears.

BODY: Be sure to thoroughly wash and rinse the folds around your baby's neck, creases under the arms and between fingers. Wash baby's legs and between toes.

DIAPER AREA: Clean baby's diaper area with warm water and a washcloth, or you can use unscented, hypoallergenic wipes. Always clean from front to back to prevent a urinary tract infection.

- **Girls:** Wash gently with unscented soap and water, between the labial folds (often swollen), from front to back. Mucous discharge with pink tinged blood is normal and is because your baby received some of your hormones at birth. This usually lasts about 5 days and is normal. Rinse baby's bottom with water from the tub.
- **Boys:** Wash gently, with unscented soap and water, lifting the scrotum up to clean underneath. The scrotum is often enlarged and looks darkened and red in colour. Do not push back skin or clean under foreskin if penis is uncircumcised. Toddlers (at approx. 3 yrs of age) can be taught to pull back skin for cleansing. Rinse baby's bottom with water from the tub.
- Thoroughly dry baby's entire body, especially between skin creases and folds, and put diaper on. Brush and comb baby's hair.