

Bathing Your Newborn Baby

Bath time can help you bond with your newborn.

Your baby will not need a bath every day. But wash their face, hands, and neck with a washcloth daily and after feedings. And clean your baby's diaper area at each diaper change.

Until the umbilical cord falls off and the belly button heals, your child's healthcare provider may recommend giving your child sponge baths. After that, give your baby a tub bath every few days.

Before bathing, gather everything you will need: Mild, fragrance-free soap; Baby shampoo; A large towel; 1 or 2 washcloths; Clean clothes; And a diaper.

When washing your baby, keep them safe and warm. And wash from clean to dirty. Face first, diaper area last.

Always check the temperature of the bath water on your wrist before putting your child in it. While bathing, keep 1 hand on your baby at all times. And never leave your baby alone around water.

To keep your baby warm during a sponge bath, wrap them in a towel. To keep your baby warm in a tub, wrap them in a towel. This is called "swaddle bathing".

To clean your baby, start with their face. Use a clean washcloth and warm water. Don't use soap. Around the eyes, look for any bits of crustiness or dried mucus.

Then, wash the outside of your baby's ears. Never put anything in your baby's ears, not even cotton swabs.

After your baby's face is clean, do a quick shampoo. Wet your newborn's hair with a damp washcloth. Massage a little shampoo onto their scalp. Use a wet washcloth to rinse. Cover your baby's eyes to protect them from any soap.

Rinse the washcloth, and then use it with a mild soap to clean your baby's body. From top to bottom, clean their neck, chest, tummy, underarms, hands, and back. Move to the legs and feet, again washing between all the folds. Make sure to rinse the soap off.

To clean your daughter's diaper area, clean from front to back. You may notice a vaginal discharge that is milky or bloody. This is normal and goes away.

If your son was circumcised, give him sponge baths until his penis is healed. The tip of the penis will look red for the first few days and you may see a yellow coating. Do not wipe off the yellow coating.

To clean the penis, rinse with water. Call your child's healthcare provider if redness persists, the penis swells or bleeds, or crusted sores appear. These could be signs of an infection.

Do not pull back the foreskin from an uncircumcised penis, even while bathing.

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After bathing, gently pat dry your baby. Then, apply a mild, fragrance-free moisturizer to your baby's skin.

Some newborns love bath time while others don't. Whether your baby enjoys it or not, when you're done, wrap them in a blanket or towel and hold them close.

Put a clean diaper on your baby and dress them warmly. After a bath is a great time to cuddle.