



Newborn Skin Care

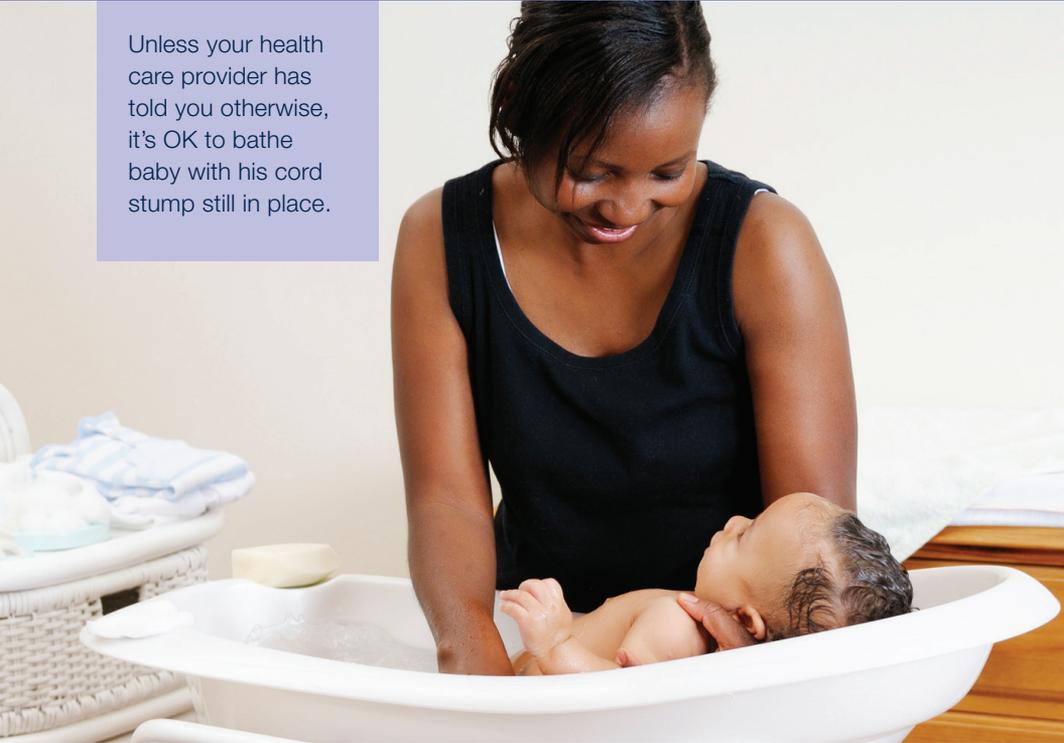
Advice on Bathing and Diapering

Learn how to:

- Properly bathe and diaper your baby
- Take care of your baby's umbilical cord stump until it falls off
- Protect your baby's skin from the sun

Bathing

Unless your health care provider has told you otherwise, it's OK to bathe baby with his cord stump still in place.



There's nothing quite as wonderful and amazing as newborn skin. It protects baby from bacteria and germs, and helps her body hold a normal temperature. Use these research-based tips from our nurse experts to help keep your baby's skin healthy, beautiful and soft.

Baths are a wonderful way to both clean and bond with your baby as he relaxes in warm water. Bathe your baby about 3 times a week—or every other day—for the first month of life if all is healthy and well with his skin.

Most babies are born with a white creamy coating on their skin called vernix. It protects baby's skin, keeping it soft. It's sticky and may not come off during bathing. There's no need to rub it off—let it wear off on its own.

Tips for Easy Bathing

Arrange your baby's tub, washcloth and towels or blankets, and products all within reach before you begin. Bathe your baby in a warm room, and eliminate drafts by keeping the door closed when possible. Keep baths short—about 5-10 minutes at first—so your baby doesn't get cold.

- Always start by washing your hands.
- Always use warm—not hot—water, between 100 and 104 degrees F. Check the water temperature with a bath thermometer or test it on the inside of your wrist or elbow.
- Always support baby's head and neck during bathing.
- Begin with a clean cloth and wash baby's face first, body second and diaper area last. Wipe from the baby's eyes and mouth into the creases as you go behind his ears, around his neck, into his underarms, between his fingers and toes, and in his diaper area.
- Only use a mild, gentle cleanser designed for babies and that is safe around the eyes.
- To shampoo, first wet baby's hair, then apply an infant-safe shampoo gently with your hand. Lightly massage baby's scalp with your hand or a soft baby brush, and rinse with water moving down the back and sides of baby's head.
- Gently rinse baby's body with your hands or a soft cloth, moving from head to feet.
- Move baby from his bath into a towel or blanket and pat his skin dry rather than rubbing it. Once dry, dress baby to keep him warm.

Cradle Cap Care

You may notice thick, crusty and yellowish scales or patches on baby's head. This is cradle cap (seborrheic dermatitis), which is a buildup of body oils and old skin on baby's scalp or face. While cradle cap usually appears on baby's head, it can spread to other parts of baby's body, although this is less common. It can appear anywhere baby has oil-producing sebaceous glands, such as under his arms. It doesn't hurt or itch and usually clears up within the first few months of life.

Eliminate cradle cap over time with these steps:

- 1 Wash baby's scalp daily with a mild baby shampoo.
- 2 Gently loosen the scales with a soft baby brush or infant comb while the shampoo is on baby's head. Avoid putting pressure on the soft spot—known as the fontanel—in his head.
- 3 For stubborn cradle cap, apply an infant-safe lotion or oil directly to the scales for at least an hour prior to washing to help gently loosen the scales.
- 4 If cradle cap persists talk to your baby's health care provider.

Never leave your baby alone during a sponge bath or while in the bath tub, even if a bath seat or sling is used.

Tub Bath Tips

- 1 Place bathtub in a safe place and on a strong surface.
- 2 Swirl water so there are no “hot spots.”
- 3 While holding baby, lower him into the water feet first. Allow baby to rest so that the water covers just up to his shoulders. If your baby’s tub provides different instructions, follow the instructions with your baby’s bathtub.
- 4 Your baby may fuss or cry at first. For comfort, try swaddling baby first before placing him in the water.

Sponge Bath Tips

- 1 Undress baby and wrap him in a towel or receiving blanket.
- 2 Then, place your wrapped baby on a second clean blanket, towel or pad.
- 3 Wet a soft washcloth in a warm basin of water.
- 4 Wring out excess water from washcloth so water doesn’t get into baby’s eyes when washing his face.
- 5 Unwrap each area as you wash, pat dry and re-wrap to keep baby as warm as possible.



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Diapering



As a parent, you may change as many as 3,000 diapers in baby's first year of life.

Follow these best practices to keep baby's diaper area as clean and healthy as possible.

- Every time baby eats or nurses, check her diaper and change if needed. This helps prevent diaper rash.
- Always wash hands before and after changing your baby's diaper to prevent the spread of germs.
- If diaper is soiled from a bowel movement, clean the area with warm water and a clean cloth or use a mild infant diaper wipe; avoid diaper wipes containing alcohol.
- Avoid using baby or talcum powder; these items contain fine dust-like pieces that can irritate baby's skin and lungs.

For Girls

- Clean genital area with a soft cloth and warm water.
- Always wipe diaper area from front to back.

For Circumcised Boys

- Clean the area with warm water **ONLY** (no soap) for the 3-4 days following circumcision.
- Follow any additional instructions from baby's health care provider for care of the circumcision area.

For Uncircumcised Boys

- Clean genital area with warm water or diaper wipe.
- Never retract the skin that covers the tip of the penis (foreskin); this will happen on its own over time.

When It's Diaper Rash

Change your baby's diaper as soon as you see it's been soiled. A common reason for diaper rash is that baby's urine or stool stayed too long on her skin. Talk to your baby's health care provider if your baby has a red rash in the diaper area that appears swollen, or has red bumps or raised areas.

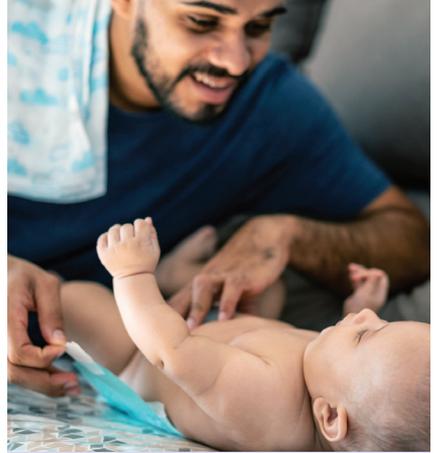
When diaper rash is present, keep baby's diaper area clean, allowing baby's skin to air dry before applying diaper cream and a clean diaper.

To protect baby's skin during diaper rash:

- If the skin appears slightly red, apply a thick layer of petroleum jelly at each diaper change.
- If the skin appears very red, apply a thick layer of white diaper cream that contains zinc oxide at each diaper change. Don't try to remove this cream completely during diaper changes; it protects the skin. Simply rinse the area with warm water, pat or air dry and apply more diaper cream until the rash is gone.

Talk to your baby's health care provider if your baby's cord:

- Appears red.
- Has fluid or drainage around it.
- Smells bad.
- Hasn't fallen off by baby's third week of life.



Caring for Baby's Umbilical Cord Stump

Umbilical cord stump care isn't as mysterious as it may seem. Practice these healthy best habits until the cord dries and falls off on its own, typically by baby's 3rd week of life.

- Unless your healthcare provider has told you otherwise, go ahead and bathe baby with the cord stump intact; it's OK to immerse it in water.
- Always wash your hands before touching baby's cord stump.
- Fold the top of baby's diaper down and away from the cord.
- Keep the cord area clean and dry.
- Wipe the cord with warm water and a soft cloth if it gets soiled with baby's waste.
- Avoid using rubbing alcohol or creams on the cord or covering it with a bandage.

Sun Protection



Sun Protection Tips for Your Baby:

- 1 Avoid direct sun exposure during baby's first 6 months by covering baby with clothing and hats with brims shading the head and neck to prevent sun exposure and potential sunburn.
- 2 From 6 months on, prevent sunburn with a small amount of an infant-safe sunscreen with a Sunscreen Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- 3 Check the label of the infant sunscreen to ensure it protects against ultraviolet rays A and B; also, choose a sunscreen specifically for infant skin and that won't sting baby's eyes.

Protecting Baby's Skin from Sun

All babies need protection from the sun starting at birth regardless of their age, race or skin color.





Newborn Skin Care



UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals

To make an appointment with one of our pediatricians or specialists,
please call (877) 822-4453 (877-UC-CHILD).

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