

Bath time checklist: How to bathe a newborn

Washing a newborn for the first time can be nerve-racking as well as a lovely bonding moment. Follow our tips on how to bathe a newborn safely.

- You don't need to wash your baby every day—for the first few weeks, your new born only needs a sponge bath two or three times per week. [Read our checklist on how to give your newborn a sponge bath.](#) ^[1]

- Once your newborn baby's umbilical cord stump has fallen off and the area is healed, you can start to bathe them in a small tub. Then, you can gently bathe your baby every day if you both enjoy the bonding time.

- Some parents like to use a small plastic tub and some like to use a sink. Babies shouldn't use a bath tub until they can sit without support from an adult.

- Never leave your baby in the bath unattended or in the care of another child , not even for a second. Avoid asking babysitters to bathe your newborn.

- Choose a time when your baby is content and not too sleepy.

- Make sure the room is nice and warm for when baby comes out of the bath.

- Prep the room beforehand, you will need: baby bath tub or clean sink, a small plastic cup , a clean baby wash cloth, some cotton balls, some baby soap and baby shampoo, a clean soft towel.

- Remove any rings or other jewelry from your hands.

- Fill the baby's bath to about 5-7 cm (2 to 3 inches) deep, of lukewarm water. Test the temperature of the water with the inside of your wrist.

- Some parents use a thermometer to check baby's bath water temperature, it shouldn't be over 38°C.

- Undress your baby down to their diaper. Keep them warmly wrapped in a towel while you wash their face and eyes using the washcloth without soap or cotton balls. Wipe from the inside of the eye outward, using each piece of cotton ball once only.

- Hold your baby so that their head is over the bath water and, using your hand or a flannel, massage their scalp with water and wash their hair with shampoo. Rinse the shampoo carefully with your hand or the plastic cup. Dry their head.

- Remove your baby's diaper and clean away any mess before putting them in the bath.

- Lower your baby gently into the bath tub or sink using one hand to hold their upper arm and support their head and shoulders.

- Always hold your baby while you are bathing them. To hold them firmly but gently, place one hand around the back and grip under their arm, with your wrist or forearm supporting their head. Your other hand is then free to wash your baby.

- Your baby will enjoy the bath if you keep them warm by gently swishing warm water over their body, keeping their head clear of the water.

- If your baby still has vernix (the creamy white layer) in their creases, leave it there as it helps the skin barrier to develop.

- Lift your baby out of the bath, with one hand around the back and the other gripping under their arm. Your wrist or forearm should support their head. Be careful, as they can be quite slippery.

- Wrap your baby in a towel, remembering to cover their head, and pat dry, including all the creases.

Put a clean diaper on.

Now may be a good time to massage your baby to help them relax and sleep. Avoid using any lotions or oil until they are over a month old. [Read our checklist on how to give a baby massage for more tips.](#) ^[2]

Dress baby in clean clothes. Newborns lose heat quickly so you may also want to use a blanket.

Sources:

Sick Kids. About Kids Health. Bath time for newborn babies.

<https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/Article?contentid=435&language=English> ^[3] Accessed August 2020.

Source URL: <https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/0-6-months/how-to-bathe-newborn>

Links

[1] <https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/0-6-months/how-to-top-and-tail-newborn>

[2] <https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/node/2825375>

[3] <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/Article?contentid=435&language=English>