

# BATHING



## Postpartum Parent Support Program

# Sheet

The baby's bath provides an excellent opportunity for parents to socialize with their baby and to take a closer look at their baby's body. As the baby grows, bath time also becomes a time for play and exercise.

At first, some parents find bathing the baby difficult because they may feel very nervous. In no time, however, parents become experts. The bath may be given at any time convenient for the parent, except right after the baby's feeding. Bathing right after a feeding may cause the baby to spit up. While it is important that the creases in the baby's skin be cleaned daily, parents should not feel guilty if they are unable to bathe their baby every day.

### Bath Safety

- Never leave your baby alone on the table or in the bath, and when reaching for anything, keep one hand on the baby.
- Never add warm or hot water to basin, or bath tub while baby is in it.
- Always support the baby's head and neck with your hand when picking him or her up. Hold the two heaviest parts, the head and the hips.
- Keep the baby's towel and washcloth for his or her use only.
- Don't use cornstarch for powdering as it may increase diaper rash.

### Preparing for the Bath

Things you will need:

- Basin
  - Soap - mild and not perfumed
  - Towels
  - Washcloth
  - Hair brush with soft bristles
  - Comb
  - Change of clothing, including a fresh diaper
  - Make sure room is comfortably warm with no drafts.
  - Remove your rings, watch or other jewellery with sharp edges.
  - Wash your hands.
  - Arrange equipment beside basin.
  - Spread large towel on table.
  - Fill basin with lukewarm water - never use hot water, only water that feels comfortable on your wrist and elbow.
  - Shampoo - mild and not perfumed.
- Now you are ready to bathe your baby.

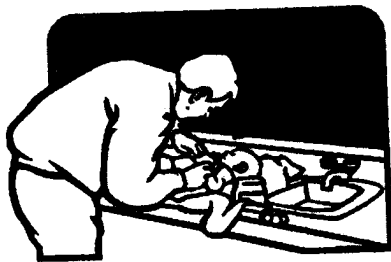
HERE ARE THE WAYS THAT NEWBORNS CAN BE BATHED:

### Sponge Bath

Remember, a baby should be bathed quickly to avoid chilling.

*Eyes:* Gently cleanse eyelids from inner corner to outer with a washcloth moistened with clear water. Use a separate corner of

the washcloth for each eye to prevent spreading any infection from one eye to the other.



*Face:* Use washcloth and clear water.

*Nose:* Never use cotton-tipped applicators to remove particles from the entrance to the nostrils, since they may push mucus or other articles further into the nose.

*Ears:* Wash well behind the ears and thoroughly dry both the outer ear and behind it. Never clean the ear canal with a cotton-tipped applicator or any other pointed article. It may cause damage by pushing wax further into the ear canal and injuring the canal wall. Any wax in the ear will work out naturally.

*Hair:* Wash the baby's hair once or twice a week. Wrap the baby in a towel or baby blanket and hold under your arm (football hold) with the baby's head over the basin or tub and his or her face turned upward. Using a mild soap or shampoo, wash gently, but thoroughly. Rinse well because soap and shampoo are drying to the skin, and dry completely. Brush gently. Following these steps will help to prevent cradle cap.

*Cord:* Keep cord as dry as possible. Refer to Cord Care information sheet.

*Body:* Wash the body by using either your hand or a washcloth. Begin at the neck paying special attention to creases at the neck, armpit and groin areas, as you work your way down. Turn the baby over and wash his or her back. Rinse well, especially if you have used soap.

*Genitalia (female):* wash gently from front to back, then cleanse anal (rectal) area by also wiping front to back.

*Genitalia (male):* Cleanse and dry penis and scrotum. Cleanse and dry anal (rectal) area. Do not push back foreskin. Refer to Care of the Foreskin information sheet. If your baby is circumcised, refer to Circumcision information sheet.

## Tub bath

Follow preparations suggested for a sponge bath. Fill the baby's bath or tub with warm water to about eight centimetres (three inches) deep and check water temperature. Slowly lower the

baby into the tub supporting him or her with your arm and keeping a firm grip with one hand. There are many bath aids on the market to make this easier.

Wash the baby as you would for a sponge bath, paying special attention to the creases. Rinse well, then lift the baby out of the tub and dry immediately with a large towel. Check the skin folds for any sign of irritation and dry these areas carefully. Dress the baby quickly (for warmth). Follow directions in sponge bath section to wash the baby's hair.

If you would like to practise bathing your baby while in hospital, your nurse would be happy to help you.



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