

Delayed Bathing

Newborns born at Markham Stouffville Hospital will not be routinely bathed before going home

Why are we no longer routinely bathing newborns in the hospital?

Historically, learning how to bath your baby in the hospital has been a normal practice. However more recently research has shown that during a bath your newborn becomes cold and has to use extra energy (glucose) to keep warm.

A drop in your baby's blood sugar can have negative impact on feeding and on your baby's ability to regulate its temperature, possibly prolonging your hospital stay.

What you need to know:

- After birth, your baby will be dried and placed skin to skin with a parent or a substitute caregiver. Keeping Mom and baby together is important and helps your newborn to transition to the outside world by helping to regulate their temperature and to breastfeed more successfully.
- Skin to skin contact is encouraged and supported throughout your stay in the hospital.
- Most newborns appear very clean within the first hour of life
- Many local hospitals have abandoned the practice of bathing newborns before discharge.

Important reasons to delay your newborn's bath:

- If your newborn is larger or smaller than average
- If you have Type 1, Type 2 or Gestational Diabetes in pregnancy
- If you are taking certain medications in pregnancy

Caring for your newborn's skin:

- You may notice that your newborn has a white waxy substance on their body; this is called vernix. Vernix can be found in larger amounts under the arms, in the folds of the neck and in your baby's closed hands.
- Some parents expect that this vernix be washed off after birth but this practice is discouraged. Vernix has many benefits including: wound healing, skin cleansing, and antimicrobial properties. This helps to protect your newborn from infection in the immediate days following birth.
- Many newborns have dry or peeling skin; this is very common for babies who are born after their due date. Vernix is a natural and inexpensive way to manage this problem.
- Baby soaps, creams and oils may smell nice, but they are not necessary and can dry out your baby's skin.
- If you have any questions about bathing your baby, please speak to your nurse, midwife or pediatrician.

This video demonstrates how to give a new baby a bath. It includes tips and tricks on how to turn bath time into an enjoyable experience for both baby and the parent or caregiver. <https://youtu.be/h5RdAft1Wjs>