

## 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>