

PEDIATRIC CORNER

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Your baby's first bath: Happy. Healthy. Heartwarming.

Bathing your newborn is a favorite of parents, grandparents, and all your other doting relatives. When we brought our oldest daughter home from the hospital; we would quarrel over who got to bathe her next, and when. Needless to say she's always been squeaky clean. Jokingly, I wonder if that's why now, we can't get her out of the tub until she shrivels up like a prune.

Typically, babies don't get dirty with the exception of a little poop on their bottom. Besides getting waterlogged, bathing your newborn too often, especially with soap can lead to dry skin, or unnecessary rashes. Officially, most newborns need just two or three baths a week besides washing their neck folds and diaper area gently at each change.

Pull Quote:

A good pediatrician will recommend only sponge bathing during your newborns first few weeks regardless of who has the honor of spoiling your little Sponge Bob or Betty.

Sponge baths are the safest for your newborn until the bellybutton stump dries and falls off. It's best to keep your sponge room warmer than usual while your baby is both undressed and wet. Baby skin cleans up perfectly with water alone. So, using mild soap isn't necessary, especially if you're concerned about dry skin. Always keep your sponge bath supplies within easy reach before getting your baby wet. The ideal sponge bath kit requires two bowls of warm water with a washcloth in each. One to wash. One to rinse. Bathrooms can warm up quickly and are often the most cost effective choice. Always create a warm, dry, large well-padded flat area to lay your squeaky clean tot. Although veteran moms favor kitchen and bathroom counters, dads or other less experienced spongers should consider setting up on the floor. After all, nothing is flatter, or larger. And, it's impossible for your baby to fall to the ground if you start there.

Keep your newborn covered in a dry towel, unwrapping only the parts you're washing. Use the moist soap free cloth on the face to avoid soap in the eyes, and always wash head to toe...for obvious reasons. Remember to rinse and dry each area before moving to the next as this will help keep your baby warm.

Bath time is the perfect time for playing, talking, touching or even giving a gentle massage to your little one. As I read my wife this column, she smiled, and began reminiscing about bath time at the Anderson home. We both grinned ear to ear from the happy memories. So, remember to soak up those bath time memories. You just might need them during their teens.

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