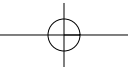
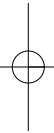
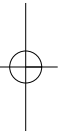


Bathing and handling your baby



Midwifery and Postnatal





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There is no need to bath your baby everyday, 2 – 3 times a week is fine. Washing your baby's face in the morning and evening and ensuring the nappy area is cleaned well whenever the nappy is changed, will keep your baby clean and comfortable.

Many parents prefer to bath their baby in the evening. A cosy feed and cuddle afterwards may help your baby settle to sleep. However, many babies enjoy bath time at any time in the day.

Before bath time, collect all the things you will need together in a warm room. When filling the bath put cold water in first and add hot water to warm it for your baby. The temperature of the water can be tested with your elbow – it should feel comfortable – just a little over your own body temperature. The water needs to be deep enough for the baby to feel comfortable. Plain water baths is ideal for your baby in the first few weeks.

It is not safe to leave your baby on a surface where they could roll off. Even young babies can sometimes roll over, so if you have forgotten anything – take your baby with you.

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Bathing

Undress your baby down to the nappy. Take the arms out of the vest and lift this over the baby's head. This will stop it dragging over the face.



Wrap the baby in a towel – this makes baby easier to handle. You do not need to touch the eyes unless they are sticky, then use cooled, boiled water and wipe only once with each piece from nose to outside.



When washing baby's face, wipe it with squeezed out cotton wool. Then dry with clean, dry cotton wool.



To wash your baby's hair, hold him or her firmly under your arm and cup the water over their hair, gently rubbing. Or you may prefer to wash your baby's hair when they are in the bath.



Unwrap the towel and remove the nappy. Use the inside of the front of the nappy to remove most of the soiling, one wipe downwards and leave it under the baby.



Clean groin and buttocks with wet cotton wool, then vagina or penis and testicles with a clean piece.

For girls wipe once from front to back – use a new piece for each wipe.



Use your preferred hand to lift and place baby's head and neck in your other wrist. With your thumb on top and fingers under the armpit - you will be able to hold your baby securely in the bath.



"Scooping up " your baby's bottom with your preferred hand, lower them into the bath, releasing your hand from underneath their bottom. Their head and neck will be resting comfortably in your wrist. Your free hand can then be used to wash baby.



When washing baby's face, wipe it with squeezed out cotton wool. Then dry with clean, dry cotton wool.



Take your baby out of the bath by “scooping” up their bottom as before. Wrap him/her up in the towel and cuddle baby close, gently drying the hair and back.



Lay baby down on a dry towel and ensure all the creases are dry – under the arms, inside elbows, under the chin, in the groin, behind the knees and between toes and fingers. Talcum powder is not recommended, as there is a risk that baby can inhale this.



Put the vest on the back of the head and lift over the face. Baby-grow suits can be put on feet first, and then pulled up behind the shoulders, for the arms to go into the sleeves.



Tight sleeves can be put on by “screwing” up the sleeve (like a sock), reaching through for the baby’s hand, and pulling it over the baby’s hand and up the arm.



After a bath, many babies may feel sleepy – a cosy feed and cuddle may help your baby to sleep. If you have any further question about bathing your baby, please feel free to ask the Health Professional caring for you and your baby.



Lifting and passing

Placing your hands under your baby's neck and head help to support the whole body, and are easier to remove when putting them down.



Pick your baby up supporting the shoulders with you palm and your thumb; your index finger can support the baby's head. Place your other hand under baby's bottom.



You can choose which hand goes at the top and bottom, depending on which arm you want them in.

Passing your baby to others this way is easy and safe.



Winding

Sit your baby on your knee, leaning them slightly backwards, with the palm of one hand supporting the shoulders and your thumb and index finger supporting the head.



Place your other hand on the baby's chest with your thumb and index finger supporting the baby's jaw and cheeks; this will prevent their head flopping.



Lean your baby slightly forward, taking the weight on your front hand. Rubbing their back upwards will help bring up any wind present.

Some babies have more wind than others; some do not bring up any wind.



Over the shoulder

Put your thumbs under your baby's armpits and extend all your fingers up, behind and around the back of their head.



Place your arms down the sides of baby's body to support their lower half and lift.

Gently ease baby onto your shoulder.

Once baby is against your shoulder, remove one hand and place it onto baby's bottom. The other hand can then move to support the shoulders, palm across the back, using your thumb and finger to support the head.

Some parents prefer to wind their baby in this position and the mother's warmth can help to release wind.



The pivot

Place the palm of one hand under your baby's shoulders, supporting the head with your thumb and index finger. The other hand goes under baby's bottom.



Lift baby in this position and guide the head with the supporting hand onto the opposite arm by pivoting on the hand under baby's bottom. Place the head on top of your elbow joint, the arm underneath is supporting the whole body.



Tilt the baby slightly towards your chest to remove your hand from her head. Your baby is now held and supported by the 'pivot' arm only, with the hand holding their thigh.



Tiger in the tree

Put your right hand on your baby's tummy.



Turn them onto their front with your left hand.



Keeping your left hand on their back, lift baby up, keeping baby's back against your chest; with baby leaning towards your receiving arm.



Holding baby with your right hand, bring your left arm down between their arms; placing your hand between baby's legs taking hold of the thigh/knee.

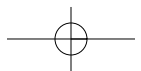


Carefully take your right hand out from underneath your left and place your palm across baby's tummy.



Baby will be comfortable in this position with both arms hanging freely.







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