

How to Bathe a Newborn (Step-by-Step)

So you have a brand new addition to the family. Congratulations! These early days with your newborn can be so full of wonder, awe, love, and a full range of emotions and...questions. All the questions. Questions like "How do I bathe my newborn?" and "Why are babies so slippery?!" Hopefully, this easy how-to can help you answer at least one of those questions.



Gather Your Supplies

You will want to gather all your supplies before starting the bath. Place everything right within reach, so you don't have to look for anything.

- Baby bathtub (or a sink will do just fine)
- Towel or baby bath cushion like this Blooming Bath Pad (to prevent baby from slipping around and add a soft cushion to an otherwise hard surface bath towel)
- Washcloth
- Gentle wash formulated for baby

- Hooded bath towel
- Baby oil or lotion for after bath
- Clean diaper
- Change of clothes
- Little cup to use for rinsing



Breaking it down into "ten simple steps" may actually make something as simple-sounding as a bath seem even more complicated than it is, but trust that it will become second nature in a couple of weeks or after a few baths, just like changing diapers will.

1



Gather all the things to have at the ready. Set them up however you will need them.

2



Place your bath sponge or towel in the sink or tub and add water, 2-3 inches at most. Make sure water temperature is just right, between 90-100 degrees Fahrenheit.

3



Place your babe in the bath or sink while supporting their head and bum with each hand. Keep baby's head and neck well above the water at all times. You can use one arm and hand to support your baby and the other to bathe.

4



Add a drop or two of baby soap to your washcloth and lather up.

5



Begin with your baby's head and face, behind the ears, and in the little neck folds.

6



Then wash your baby's torso, arms, and legs. Use your cup to slowly pour warm water over them to keep warm and rinse off the soap suds.

7



Be sure to get all the little folds and crevices, paying careful attention to your baby's genitals. For girls, be sure to wash front to back to prevent bacteria from entering the vagina. For boys, wash back to front.

8



Carefully remove your little one—they will be slippery! Then wrap baby in a soft, dry hooded towel, patting baby dry gently, paying extra attention to all the creases and folds where excess moisture collects and can cause irritation.

9



Apply baby oil, lotion, or skin moisturizer all over. Baby's delicate skin can dry out easily and loses moisture in the bath, so it is important to rehydrate it and lock in moisture.

10



Diaper and dress, then exhale—you did it!

When Can You Bathe a Newborn?

It is ideal to wait until at least 24-48 hours after birth to sponge bathe your baby. This allows them to acclimate to life outside the womb and begin to regulate their body temperature a bit better.

Another reason for waiting is that your baby will likely have a coating of vernix on their skin, which is extremely beneficial to your little one as it has antibacterial properties and serves as a protective coating for your baby's thin and delicate skin.

Doctors recommend you wait until the umbilical stump has fallen off to fully submerge a baby in water, which usually takes about 1-3 weeks.

How Often Should You Bathe a Newborn?

You can sponge bathe your baby as often as daily, but until the baby starts really crawling around and getting dirty, a daily bath isn't really necessary. A couple of baths a week should suffice until then.

