



Bathing an Infant

How to bathe an infant:

1. Keep the infant in a safe place, such as an infant seat, while you gather supplies: infant towel and washcloth, infant bathtub, infant soap, cotton balls or pads, clean diaper and clothes.
2. Use something to line the tub to keep the infant from slipping, such as a foam liner or a towel. Be sure to dry and/or launder the foam liner or towel after use to prevent the growth of germs.



3. Fill the tub with two to three inches of warm (not hot) water. Test the water temperature with your elbow.
4. Use a damp cotton ball or pad to gently wipe the infant's eyes before you put him or her in the tub. Use a separate cotton ball for each eye to prevent the spread of possible infections. Be sure to support the infant's head and neck.
5. Gently place the infant in the tub of water. If he or she is not old enough to sit up, support the head and neck as you recline the infant slightly.
6. Use a clean, damp washcloth without soap to wash the infant's face. Gently wash the outside and back of each ear and the neck.

7. If you are washing hair, lean the infant back and gently massage water into hair and scalp. Use a cup to pour water over his or her hair, being careful to let the water run backward, not into the infant's face. If you use a mild baby shampoo, when you rinse it, cup your hand across the infant's forehead so the suds run toward the sides and soap does not get into the eyes.

8. Regularly pour water gently over the infant's body so he or she does not get cold.

9. Wash the infant's body, starting with the chest. After washing with a soapy washcloth, rinse the cloth in the bath water and use it to rinse the infant.



10. Pat the infant dry with a clean towel. Make sure to dry gently behind the ears and in the skin folds, so that no excess moisture is left there. Always keep the infant covered with a towel to stay warm until he or she is dry. Gently dry the hair with a towel as much as possible. The fine hair of an infant will dry quickly. Do not use a hair dryer, as it is unnecessary and potentially dangerous.

11. When dry, lay the infant down in a safe place to put on a clean diaper and clothes.



Bath safety:

1. Choose a place where there are no drafts, so the infant stays warm during the bath.
2. Never leave the infant alone—even for a moment—in a bathtub or near any water. An infant can drown in as little as two inches of water.
3. Do not use bubble bath or harsh soap as these may cause rashes.