

# Bathing & Umbilical Cord Care

## Bathing

### Before Cord Falls Off

For the first 1-2 weeks before their umbilical cord stump falls off, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends cleaning babies with a washcloth rather than giving a full bath. There's no need to do this every day—washing about 2-3 times per week should be enough. Washing them too much may dry out their skin.

- Undress baby, wrap in a towel, and lay them on a flat surface. It can be on a counter, changing table, bed, or a blanket or towel on the floor.
- Use a washcloth to wipe off your baby. To keep them warm, you can unwrap their towel one area at a time to expose only the part you're washing.
- It's okay to just use water. If you want to use some soap, use a mild soap made for babies.

### After Cord Falls Off

After their cord stump falls off, you can give your baby a bath. In their first year, about 3 baths per week is usually enough. Bathing them more often is okay, as long as it's not making their skin too dry.

- Use a plastic tub or sink with about 2-3 inches of warm water and a few drops of mild baby soap.
- Always check the water temperature before bathing.
- Pay special attention to their armpits, behind the ears, around the neck, and in the diaper area.
- To keep them warm, you can gently pour warm water or keep a warm washcloth on them.
- Gently lift out of bath and pat dry with a towel.
- NEVER leave baby unattended in the tub, even for a second.

## Umbilical Cord Care

- The umbilical cord usually falls off in 1-2 weeks, but it can sometimes take up to 3-4 weeks.
- It's important to keep this area clean and dry!
- Keep your baby's diaper folded below the stump.
- As stump dries and heals, it's normal for it to get darker and stiffer.
- After the stump falls off, you may notice some redness or a few spots of blood. Talk to your baby's doctor if you notice persistent bleeding or if the spot doesn't seem to be healing.

