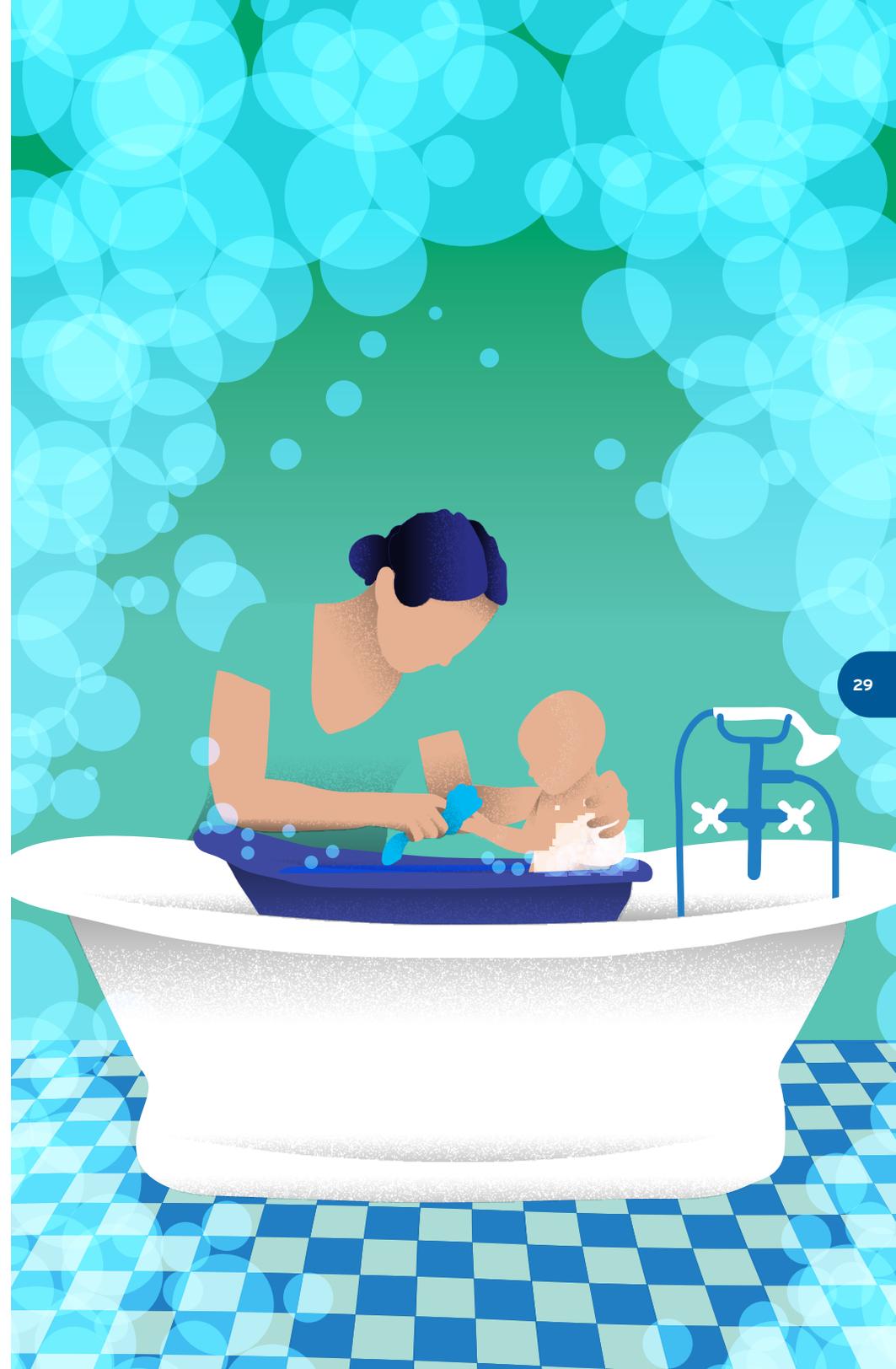


# 4

## Bathing & Body Care

It is important to keep your newborn's body clean and dry. That means giving your baby a sponge bath until his or her umbilical cord stump heals. After the cord is fully healed, you can move bath time into a sink or tub. There are also specific ways to safely and gently clean your newborn's eyes, nose, mouth and genitals. The following covers what you need to know about bathing and body care in the first weeks of your newborn's life.



# Bathing

**Y**OUR BABY SHOULD BE SPONGE bathed until his or her umbilical cord stump heals, which can take three weeks. Be sure to gather all of the items you will need, including a washcloth, soap, cotton, safety Q-tips and a towel before you start bathing your infant in a warm room.

## Sponge bath directions



**1** Wash your baby's eyes gently with water and a damp washcloth or sponge, followed by the nose and face.



**2** Wash the ears gently one at a time. You want to make sure that you do not pull on the ears. The wax should be removed once a week with the edge of a washcloth. Do not use any sharp or hard objects to clean the ears. You may use Q-tips to clean the outer part of the ears.



**3** Wash the arms, legs and body with soap and water. Try not to get the cord stump wet. As each body part is washed and rinsed, cover that area with a towel as soon as possible.



**4** Wash the scalp and hair with baby shampoo. Do this last so that your baby's head is not wet for too long.



**5** Do not wash the inside of your baby's mouth. If there are thick white patches that do not come off easily by gently scraping them with a clean fingernail, this may be thrush, and you should speak to your doctor.

## Tub bath directions



**1** Wash the face, nose and eyes, just as was done in the sponge bath.



**2** Lower your baby into the water feet first. Be careful so you don't frighten her. Stand or kneel at her right side, supporting her with your left forearm under her head, neck and shoulders, with your left hand spread out under her hips, supporting her back. Hold her feet and legs with your right hand with one finger between her ankles. If she appears frightened, you can try covering her body with a warm washcloth before lowering her into the water.



**3** Wash her entire body with soap and water.



**4** Wash her scalp and hair with baby shampoo two or three times a week. The soft spot is well protected, so don't be afraid to wash it.



**5** Lift your baby out of the water, holding her in the same manner as when she was put in the tub.



**6** Lie her down on her stomach on a soft, warm, dry towel and cover her.

**7** Dry her skin thoroughly and gently by patting with a soft, clean towel. Do not rub her skin roughly. Dry her back first and then turn her over and finish drying her body, paying special attention to the creases or folds behind her ears and in her neck, armpits, elbows, groin, buttocks, knees, toes and fingers to prevent chafing.

## Newborn Body Care



### The nose

Babies need to be able to breathe freely through their nose at all times. Since a baby cannot blow his nose, you can clean it out with a bit of clean cotton or a Q-tip dipped in water. Wash the nose by gently turning the cotton in the opening of the nose. If your baby has mucus in his nose, you can get it out with a nasal bulb syringe and saline drops. The best time to do this is after a bath, when the inside of the nose is moist. No sharp or hard objects should ever be used to clean either the nose or ears.



### The eyes

You should gently remove any secretions from your baby's eyes with cotton balls and water. By turning the head from one side to the other while cleaning the eyes, the secretions will not run into the opposite eye. If there is a thick pus secretion in the eyes, call your pediatrician for instructions.



### The genitals

In both sexes, the genitals should be gently cleaned. Girls should be washed from front to back using a soft washcloth with mild soap and water. If a boy is uncircumcised, it is not necessary to retract the foreskin at this time.



### The nails

The fingernails and toenails should be filed and cleaned regularly. By keeping the nails clean, you can prevent infections of the skin that might occur if the baby accidentally scratches himself. The fingernails should be filed slightly rounded and the toenails should be filed straight across and not rounded at the corners to prevent ingrown toenails. It is normal for babies to have thin or brittle toenails.



## Circumcision Care

**A**FTER YOUR SON'S CIRCUMCISION, there will be either a visible incision or small plastic ring placed around the head of the penis, called a Plastibell. At each diaper change, pull the skin back gently and place a piece of gauze with petroleum jelly on it on top of the circumcision site. This keeps the wound from sticking to the diaper. Make sure that the petroleum jelly is pure, without perfumes or other additives. You can also apply petroleum jelly directly to the inside of the diaper.

It takes about five days for the moist, raw skin to dry and become

light pink. If a Plastibell has been used, it takes about five to seven days for it to fall off. Be sure not to pull on the Plastibell, as it can cause soreness and bleeding. No additional care is needed other than good hygiene at this juncture.

If the Plastibell does not fall off after two weeks or if your baby has a fever or difficulty urinating and you notice swelling, foul-smelling discharge, more than a drop or two of blood, black or blue discoloration, or consistent redness that appears suddenly and does not disappear after a few days, call your doctor's office.