



## When to do cares?

- All cares should be catered to your baby's needs, it is best not to disturb your baby during sleep and to wait for signs that baby is beginning to wake.
- If necessary, rouse baby, speaking softly and placing your hands on them gently. The member of the team looking after your baby will advise you when the best time is based on Developmental age and skin integrity.
- Delivering cares along with feed times can enable optimum rest time. Pre-feed can enable baby plenty of time to digest milk without being moved, reducing the possibility of inducing reflux or vomits. However, some babies will regularly fill their nappies during or post feeds.
- We advise that all babies have top to toe daily if clinically stable.
- Mouth care can be performed with each set of cares or nappy change if needed.
- We do not routinely clean baby's eyes unless become 'sticky', a member of the team looking after your baby will advise you on this.
- Babies should not be left more than 6 hours in a nappy.

According to the latest NHS advice, baby bath seats should not be used. Babies of any age can drown very quickly in just a few centimetres of water, with no noise or struggle.

Parents who still choose to use a bath seat are being given the following advice:

- Always keep your child within arm's reach
- Never leave your child, even for a second
- Make sure your bath seat is stuck firmly to the bottom of the bath
- Do not let bath seats give you a false sense of security (they're not safety devices)

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### Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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### During the bath

- Using cotton wool or pads gently wash your baby's face [not eyes] neck and behind the ears and then dry using a clean piece of cotton wool / pad or towel.
- Scoop up a handful of water and wet baby's head and wash the hair with gentle massage movements. Then dry head thoroughly using circular movements, with a towel.
- Remove the nappy and support the baby to enter the water by holding them close and securely. Keeping them wrapped in the muslin or towel.
- Let the feet enter the water first before slowly immersing the rest of the body. Keep speaking softly and proceed slowly until baby adjusts and relaxes.
- Keep the feet touching the end of the bath, so baby feels safe and has a boundary.



### Top and Tail

#### What is top to tail?

- Where you wash your baby's face, neck, hands, and bottom using bowls of warm water rather than bathing them fully.
- You will be encouraged to top and tail your baby from as early as possible initially once a day.
- Parents should take the lead on personal care/ nappy care and top to tail for their baby, supported by staff from admission.
- It is an opportunity for you to get to know your baby closely and to observe and communicate with them. Talk and reassure your baby and respond to baby's behavioral cues. Speaking softly and being aware on how you are moving them. Being aware of any likes or dislikes, responding to baby's cues and individual needs.

- It encourages you to become partners in care with members of our team looking after your baby here at St Peters hospital NICU.

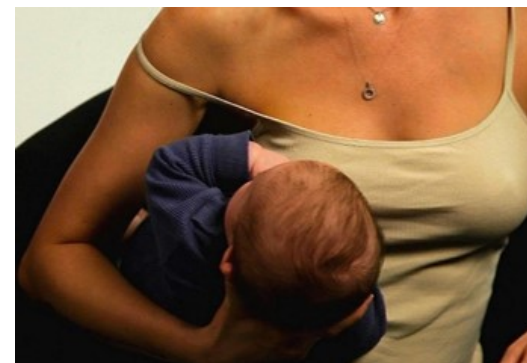
## Preparation

- Keep lighting low, noise, and activity levels.
- Prepare equipment needed e.g., clean clothes, cotton wool, clean nappy, nappy sack, warm water, and plastic pots (you will be asked to bring in your own nappies, cotton wool, nappy sacks, and clothes) We will provide you with two plastic pots, one for the face and body and one for the bottom (which will be changed daily).
- Wash hands prior to handling baby and after nappy care.
- Verbally prepare baby speaking softly, touching before removing covers and clothes.

## Positioning

- Ensure baby is in the best position, one that is comfortable and least disruptive for the baby. Baby can have cares side lying or on their back. (side lying is sometimes more supportive of self-regulatory strategies)

- Ensure the environment is quiet, calm, and away from bright lights or draughts.
- Make sure you have everything ready in advance e.g., cotton wool, clean nappy, nappy sack, warm towel, clean clothes, and large muslin/ flannel.
- Fill the bath with warm water (deep enough to cover baby`s torso) and check the temperature of the water with your elbow to make sure it is not too hot or cold. (We do not recommend the use of bath product).
- Prepare the baby for a pleasant experience by arousing them gently and talking softly while undressing them. Leave their nappy on for now and wrap them in a clean towel or a large muslin to keep them warm. (We recommend a swaddled bath to help contain your baby and make them feel safe)
- Keeping their head and neck uncovered lift baby and tuck them under your arm. (Like a rugby ball)



## Bathing

Bathing your baby is an opportunity for you to get to know your baby closely and to observe and communicate with them. It also encourages good attachment which is the close relationship between parent and child.

With support from the staff member looking after you and baby, you and your baby should have a relaxing and enjoyable experience.

If you would like to bath your baby, please ask the staff member looking after him / her as not all babies are ready at the same time.



## Preparation

- If it is your first time bathing your baby and you are feeling unsure you can practice with a doll first.
- It is important to choose a time when your baby is likely to be awake and relaxed and is convenient for you.

- Ensure when cleaning nappy area, baby legs are not lifted high, raising intracranial pressure.
- Wrapping one half of baby while attending to another may help.



- When positioning a new nappy, keep baby's legs folded, gently place feet sole to sole.



## Cleaning baby

- Start by cleaning baby`s face using water and cotton wool. Wash around the forehead, cheeks, ears, and creases of the neck (there is no need to clean the eyes unless they become sticky and if so the member of the team looking after your baby will give you some sterile water to use and show you how to clean them if necessary)
- Dry thoroughly especially the neck and creases as these areas will get sore if left damp.
- Undress your baby leaving the nappy on. Wash their chest, tummy, under their arms, hands, and feet with a clean piece of cotton wool and water (if their umbilical cord is still attached wash around it) then dry thoroughly. Try not to keep baby exposed for too long as they may get cold quickly.
- Next undo the nappy. It may help to place a clean nappy under the dirty one ready to put on when you have finished cleaning their bottom.
- Undo the soiled nappy and fold back the sticky tabs, fold over the front to cover the soiled area, this should avoid soiling the sheets or clothing minimising disruption.
- Clean skin gently (with warm water from the tap) and cotton wool (wipes can be used on term babies over 2 weeks old) removing any urine or faeces.
- Work from front to back to avoid bacterial infection.
- Dry bottom using a patting / blotting methods rather than rubbing to avoid sheering of the skin.
- Slide soiled nappy from under baby straight into nappy sack.
- Secure clean nappy ready underneath in place.
- We do not routinely use barrier creams on babies but if their bottom becomes red or sore the member of the team looking after your baby will advise you on which cream is best for your baby.
- Dispose of nappy sack and water (water not to be put in sink, put into the nappy sack or bin) into the clinical waist bins with yellow and black stripped bin bags.
- Wash hands before doing anything else.
- If baby is dressed put on clean clothes.
- It may also be a good time to change your baby`s bedding (ask the member of the team to show you where the linen is kept so you can help yourself).

Your baby will need a top and tail every day unless they are having a bath instead or you are advised not to. How often you need to change your baby`s nappy will depend on their own requirements so ask the staff member looking after him / her.