

Preferred Method of Infant Bathing: Sponge or Tub



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Population & Procedure

Infants (late preterm (34 – 36/6) and term (>37 weeks))

- All susceptible to hypothermia ²
- Preterm infants at a greater risk ⁵
- Hypothermia can lead to hypoglycemia and respiratory distress ⁵

Bathing Commonalities

- No more than 10 min ^{2,5}
- Optional use of warmer (if > 97.9 °F) ^{1,5}
- Wash above shoulders while swaddled ^{1,2,5}
- Dried and wrapped (optional use of warmed blankets) ^{1,2,5}

Intervention

Tub i.e. deep immersion bathing

- Submerge infant to shoulders in 100 – 103.9 °F water. ^{1,2,5}

Comparison

Sponge

- Parts of infant unswaddled and washed then rewrapped ^{2,5}

Outcomes

Tub i.e. deep immersion

- Less temperature variation during bath ⁴
- Body not exposed to air, decreasing risk of cold stress ³
- Significantly decreases instance of hypothermia post bath ^{1,2,4,5,6}
- No significant risk to umbilical cord complications ^{2,3}
- Calmer infant ^{2,3}

Sponge

- Increase temperature loss post bath ^{1,2,4,5}
- Increased instance of infant crying ²

Recommendations & Implications



Deep immersion method recommended for newborn baths



- Face, hair and neck washed while swaddled
- Submerged in 100 – 103.9 °F water to the shoulders
- Radiant warmers and warmed blankets may be used.
- Refer to AWHONN's 2013 guidelines
- Clinical practice update and policy creation
- Acquire wash basin deep enough for shoulder immersion

References

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