

Bathing your baby becomes a special responsibility often enjoyed by a new parent. Always stay within arm's length of baby at all times. Do not take your eyes off baby.

Bathing Your Baby

Most babies come home from the hospital with remnants of the umbilical cord still attached to the belly button, or the umbilicus. Until this falls off give your baby only sponge baths. Clean the navel area twice a day or so with a cotton swab dipped in antiseptic. Do this gently but thoroughly, making sure to get to the base of the cord stump. Watch for yellow matter, a sort of "weeping" that may develop, and for redness. These are signs of possible infection-notify your doctor if they persist. Keeping the top edges of the baby's diaper folded down below the navel will help to keep the area dry. When the cord falls off, usually within ten days to two weeks after the baby's birth, it is not unusual for a few drops of blood to be left on the navel. No bandage, binding, or tape is required. If the umbilicus doesn't dry up in a few days after the cord comes off, an umbilical granuloma may be present. This is a little nubbin of tissue in the umbilicus at the junction of the old cord and the new skin. Your doctor can remedy the situation easily at the baby's first checkup. If there is much bleeding or a foul odor coming from the cord, consult your doctor earlier for any special instructions needed.

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For a sponge bath, you will need a warm, draft free room, a basin of lukewarm water, and two big towels- one to bathe the baby on, and the other to wrap him in after the bath. If your baby cries when totally undressed, give him a bath in stages, removing only part of the clothing at one time. Many babies love the feeling of being totally naked, though and enjoy waving their arms and legs about freely. You don't really need

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

A bath seat will give your child added support while in the bathtub, but it will not protect the child from injury or drowning. Keep the following tips in mind while using a bath seat or bath ring. Never use a bath seat on textured or non-skid surfaces unless the manufacturer's instructions specifically state the seat is intended for such surfaces.

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