

Advice on Skincare for Newborn Babies

Children's Services
Women & Children's Services

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information and to answer some common queries you may have.



Information for patients and visitors

Introduction

This leaflet is to provide advice on caring for your newborn baby's skin. If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's skin, please speak to your midwife, health visitor or GP.

Faced with a huge range of baby cleansing and skincare products, parents are often confused about what to use and when. Research now indicates that 'less is most definitely more' and it is better to avoid the use of skin cleansing and moisturising products for the first few weeks until your baby's skin has had time to mature naturally.

1. Following birth, vernix should be left on the skin to absorb naturally. Vernix is the creamy white coating that covers the newborn baby
2. A baby comb can be used to remove debris, such as skin flakes, from baby's hair. This is in place of using shampoo for the first few weeks
3. It is not a good idea to clean baby's eyes unless the midwife, health visitor or doctor tells you otherwise. If the eyes are sticky, it is best to gently wipe with cotton wool dampened with sterile or cooled, boiled water – use fresh cotton wool for each eye
4. If baby's skin is dry or cracked, avoid creams or lotions if possible as they may cause further problems, some natural plant based oils (e.g. almond oil, olive oil) can be used to massage into dry skin. Please seek advice from your midwife or health visitor. Early skin exposure (before 2-4 weeks) to some products may result in allergic reactions or eczema so we recommend using plain water for cleansing your baby, i.e. no soap or baby bath. After a few weeks,

the skin will have developed its naturally protective barrier so (if needed) you can then introduce an emollient based cream on any dry skin, which will not dry out the skin but will give some protection. Any product introduced should be used sparingly and should be free from alcohol, colour and perfume. Your health visitor or chemist can advise on products

5. We advise that you avoid using baby wipes until your baby is at least 2-4 weeks old. When used, they should be mild and free from alcohol and perfume
6. We recommend that for premature babies, skin products are avoided for 6-8 weeks as the skin's protective barrier takes longer to mature
7. Nappy rash can occur due to prolonged exposure to urine or faeces. Care of the nappy area should include cleansing with water whenever the nappy is soiled, and the use of good quality super-absorbent nappies. A petroleum based lubricant can be used as a protection against nappy rash. If your baby does experience nappy rash, use a zinc based cream to treat it

References

1. Atherton D, Mills K. (2004). What can be done to keep babies' skin healthy? RCM Midwives Journal 7(7): 288-290
2. Lund CH et al (2001a) (2001b) Neonatal skincare: clinical outcomes of the AWHONN / NANN research based practice project on knowledge and skincare practices. Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses and the National Association of Neonatal Nurses. Journal of Obstetric, Gynaecologic and Neonatal Nursing. 30(1):30-51

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3. Medves JM, O'Brien B. (2001) Does bathing newborns remove potentially harmful pathogens from the skin? *Birth* 28(3):161-5
4. Trotter S (2002) Skincare for the newborn: exploring the potential harm of manufactured products. *RCM Midwives Journal* 5(11): 376-8
5. Trotter S (2004) Care of the Newborn: Proposed new guidelines. *British Journal of Midwifery* 12 (3): 152-7

Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital – you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital – you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:
nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Confidentiality and How We Use Data

Personal information on NHS patients is collected and recorded within paper and electronic formats primarily to support high quality care that is safe and effective. To do this, information is also used to support quality improvement activities, investigate any concerns you may raise as well as to support and understand NHS performance. All NHS staff have a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it. Other circumstances where information may be shared include administrative teams to plan future care needed, commissioners of Trust services, other NHS or social care providers and in some cases voluntary sector providers.

Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour

The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.

Risk Management Strategy

The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

Moving & Handling

The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only

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ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

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**Scunthorpe General Hospital
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**Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue
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DN14 6RX
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