

Advice on Skincare for Newborn Babies



Information for Patients Children's Services



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, wash your hands before cleaning the eyes. Gently wipe each eye with cotton wool dampened with sterile or cooled, boiled water. Wipe the eye from the inside corner outwards and discard the cotton wool. Repeat the process until the eye is clean. Clean each eye at a time. This is to avoid spreading any potential infection from eye to eye.
4. If baby's skin is dry or cracked, do not use creams or lotions. They may cause more harm than good. The top layer of the skin will peel off over a few days leaving perfect skin underneath. 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. Getting to know your newborn NHS 2018
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
3. Crozier K and Macdonald S 2010 Effective skin care regimes for the term infant Evidence Based Midwifery

Any Comments, Compliments, Concerns or Complaints

If you have any other concerns please talk to your nurse, therapist or doctor. Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are available on 03033 306518 (Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Goole). You can also contact nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

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