

Bathing highlights from the
AWHONN 2018 Neonatal Skin Care Evidenced-Based Clinical Practice Guideline

- The Guideline recommends, “Ideally, infants should be bathed with immersion tub bathing or swaddled immersion bathing.”
- Bathing equipment can be a transmission source of hospital-acquired infections if basins are shared among patients. Clean and disinfect between patients.
- For full term infants, delay the first bath until their temperature is $\geq 36.8^{\circ}$ on 2 consecutive measurements and infant is between 6 and 24 hours old. If mother is HIV+, bathe infant right after birth.
- No differences in cord healing, bacterial colonization of the cord, or cord infection between tub bathing and sponge bathing for healthy, term infants.
- Ideal bath water temperature ranges from 38°C to less than 40°C (100°F to less than 104°F). Consider a thermometer to accurately measure temperature.
- Special considerations for preterm infants:
 - Postpone bath until thermal and cardiorespiratory stability and at least 6 hours, ideally 12-24 hours after birth.
 - Consider weight, gestational age and severity of illness prior to bathing.
 - Carefully consider the need for bathing for infants $<1500\text{g}$.
 - Attention to reducing stress and maintaining body temperature
 - Swaddled immersion bathing, hand containment, avoid distractions
 - Some infant post-bath recovery options
 - Skin-to-skin holding, swaddling, nesting, dressing, undisturbed time, radiant warmer