



Basic care of the neonate

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'Basic skills' include.....

- *Hygiene needs*
- Bathing / Top & tailing
- Nappy Care & observing Elimination
- Mouth Care
- Cord Care
- Eye Care
- Care Routines

Bathing / Topping and Tailing

- Timing – is dependent on the condition, gestation and age of the baby
- Not necessary to be done immediately after birth
- Central temperature should be >36.5 C
- Use neutral soaps and avoid alkaline substances which disrupts the acid mantle of the skin
- ***Involve / include parents***

Baby bathing: the basic principles

- No right or wrong way BUT the following 3 principles **MUST** be remembered....
- **Keep the baby warm**
- **Keep safe**
- **Temperature – water no more than 37.8 degrees C**
- ‘Top and tailing’ – face and nappy area cleaned



Nappy Care

- Change as soon as possible after soiling to avoid rash associated with ammonia
- Barrier creams – can be used but are not essential. Variety of creams are available when treatment *is* necessary (i.e. persisting nappy rash, thrush).
- ***Involve / include parents***
- **GENERAL rule-** water only for cleaning, no products necessary for clear, healthy skin

Skin

- Observe skin – should be clear, soft and intact in term neonate. Sensitive in 1st year of life
- Preterm skin- is more transparent the earlier the gestation, more fragile and easily damaged
- Avoid products and use water only for any gestation
- If dry and flaky skin (e.g. post-term neonates)- Olive oil can be used from pharmacy

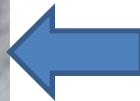
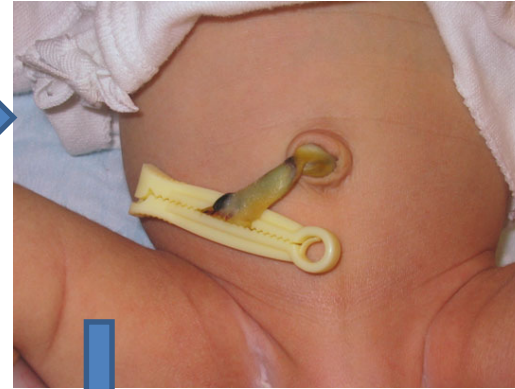
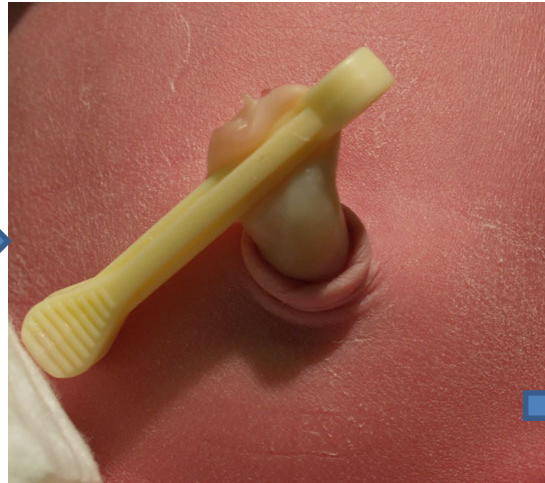
Mouth Care

- Check mouth – make sure it is clean and moist (include lips and mucous membranes and tongue)
- Observe tongue – should be dark pink. Check for thrush that appears white on the tongue
- Clean mouth with mouth care sponges or cotton buds using cooled, boiled water
- ***Involve / include parents***

Cord Care

- 2-5 cm cord is left after cutting
- Separates over 5-16 days
- Remove clamp on day 3-4
- Keep clean with water when bathing or changing nappy (once day)
- Avoid powder or spirit-based substance – this delays separation and increases infection rates
- ***Involve / include parents***

From birth to umbilical stump



Eye care

- Do not clean unless discharging
- Sticky eyes are usually due to blocked tear ducts
- If infected – offensive & redness
- Clean each eye separately, cotton wool swiped once, from inner part outwards
- Use sterile OR cooled boiled water
- ***Involve / include parents***

Care Routines

- Individualised care 'routines'
- Where possible, parents to participate and perform care procedures.
- Observe the neonate particularly when sick & unstable- give 'time out' if signs of stress are evident.
- Minimal handling principles apply when the neonate is more unstable

Further detail & resources...

- For more details on assessment and care of the newborn baby / neonate, go to the online resource, Unit 2F.....
- http://www.cetl.org.uk/learning/neonatal/unit_2f/player.html

Further Reading

- BOOK CHAPTER
- Petty, J. D. (2012). Personal Hygiene and Pressure Ulcer prevention. In S. Macqueen, E. Bruce, & F. Gibson (Eds.), *The Great Ormond Street Hospital Manual of Children's Nursing Practices*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
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- Atherton D.J. (2009) Managing healthy skin for babies *Infant* 5; 4: 130-32. Full text=http://www.neonatal-nursing.co.uk/pdf/inf_028_he.pdf
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- Trotter S (2008). Neonatal skin & cord care – the way forward. *Nursing in Practice (January/February)* 40 (Dermatology): 40-45 <http://www.sharontrotter.org.uk/NIP2008new.htm>
- Trotter S (2013). *Why no baby skincare product should be advertised or promoted as 'suitable for new-born skin'*. *Midwifery Digest* 23(2): p217-221. <http://www.sharontrotter.org.uk/midirs2013.html>
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- Zupan J and Gardner P (2004) Topical Umbilical cord care at birth (Cochrane review) In the Cochrane Library, Issue3, Oxford, update software<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/o/cochrane/clsysrev/articles/CD001057/frame.html>
- CORD CLAMPING
- Hutton, EK; & Hassan, ES (2007) Late vs Early Clamping of the Umbilical Cord in Full-term Neonates: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Controlled Trials. *JAMA*;297(11):1241-1252. doi:10.1001/jama.297.11.1241. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/297/11/1241.full.pdf>