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](http://www.cetl.org.uk/learning/neonatal/unit_2f/player.html)
Further Reading

- **BOOK CHAPTER**

- **SKIN CARE**

- **UMBILICAL CORD CARE**

- **CORD CLAMPING**