



# Antenatal information

**Caring for your baby**



University Hospital Southampton  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Welcome

These slides cover some of the key information you may require when looking after your newborn baby

- Hand hygiene
- Changing your baby's nappy
- 'Topping and Tailing' – giving your baby a wash
- Taking care of the umbilical cord
- Bathing your baby

# Hand hygiene

**Hand hygiene is very important during pregnancy and immediately after you have a baby because you are more susceptible to infection.**

You should wash your hands:

- before and after using the toilet or changing a nappy
- before you feed your baby or prepare feeds
- before and after handling food, especially raw food like meat and vegetables
- before eating
- after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing
- before and after changing a wound dressing
- when your hands are dirty

Washing your hands properly is the simplest, cheapest and most effective way to remove dirt, viruses and bacteria. This will stop them spreading to other people and objects, which can cause illnesses such as food poisoning, flu or diarrhoea.

# How to wash your hands

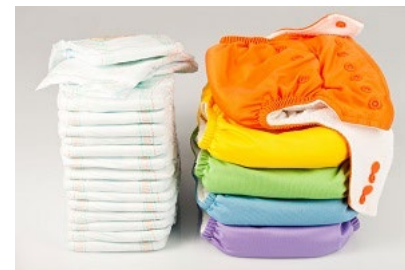
- Use warm soapy water for 20 seconds.
- Please click on the picture below to watch a video showing you how to wash your hands effectively.



- For more information about the importance of good hand hygiene please visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

# Changing your baby's nappy – choosing the right nappy for your baby

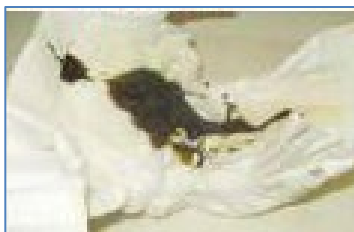
- Disposable and cloth nappies have different advantages and disadvantages including:
  - cost with cloth (washable) nappies are cheaper if you add up the cost over a year
  - convenience
  - the impact on the environment
- Some cloth nappy brands offer free samples for you to try out.
- You may also want to consider a nappy laundry service as a convenient alternative to home laundering.
- Some parents choose to use a combination of both reusable nappies at home and disposable ones when they are out and about.



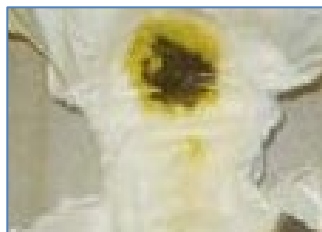
# Changing your baby's nappy - understanding your baby's poo

## Colour:

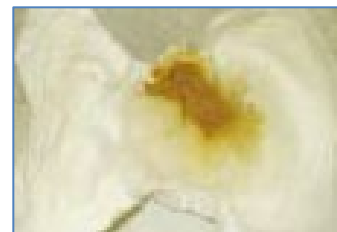
1. Your baby's first poo is called meconium. This is a black sticky substance.
2. When your baby is three to four days old, their poo will start to change colour, this is sometimes called a 'changing stool'.
3. After a few days the poo will change to a yellow or mustard colour.



Meconium



Changing stool



Yellow or mustard

# Changing your baby's nappy – understanding your baby's poo

## **Consistency:**

- If your baby is breast fed their poo may be very runny, but should not smell. This is not diarrhoea.
- If your baby has formula milk their poo will have a paste like consistency with some smell.
- Please speak to your midwife, Health Visitor or GP if:
  - your baby's poo is very pale as this may be a sign of jaundice
  - your baby's poo was yellow and has become green again
  - you notice a definite change of any kind, such as the poos becoming very smelly, very watery or harder (particularly if there's blood in them)

# Frequency of wet and dirty nappies

- **Day of birth** - Small amounts of urine that may contain “rust” coloured spots of concentrated urine. One or more dirty nappies with black sticky meconium.
- **Days 1-2** Two or more wet nappies and one or more meconium nappies.
- **Days 3-4** - Three or more wet nappies. The amount will increase and the nappies will feel heavier. Two or more dirty nappies which will now start to change colour from black to brown/green.
- **Day 5+** Five or more wet heavy nappies. Two or more soft yellow poos per day.



# Frequency of wet and dirty nappies



Your baby may not poo every day but this should not be a cause for concern if your baby has plenty of wet nappies. Please speak to your midwife, Health Visitor or GP if you are concerned.

Some brands of disposable nappy have a yellow line at the front which will go green/blue when it is in contact with urine. This can be helpful if you are unsure if your baby is having wet as well as dirty nappies.

If you have a girl, you may see a white discharge on her nappy for a few days after birth. This is caused by hormones that have crossed the placenta to your baby, but these will soon disappear from her system. These hormones can occasionally cause slight bleeding like a mini period. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to your midwife.

# Changing your baby's nappy – be prepared

Before you change your baby's nappy, wash your hands and make sure you are prepared. You should have:

- a changing mat
- cotton wool and a bowl of warm water – take enough cotton wool out of the packet before you start. This allows you to avoid putting a hand which has handled dirty cotton wool into the packet
- a plastic bag or bucket for the dirty nappy and dirty cotton wool
- barrier cream to protect your baby's skin (if required)
- a clean nappy (and liner and cover if you're using cloth nappies)
- clean clothes

# Changing your baby's nappy

- If your baby's nappy is dirty, use the nappy to wipe most of the poo from their bottom.
- Use cotton wool and warm water to remove the poo, wiping from front to back.
- Clean the whole nappy area, making sure you clean inside folds of skin:
  - Wiping from front to back is especially important for girls, as it will prevent infections in the vagina.
  - Boys should be cleaned around the testicles and penis. It is not necessary to pull back their foreskin.
- Ensure your baby's skin is dry before you put on a clean nappy
- If you're using cloth nappies, put in a nappy liner and then fasten the nappy. Adjust it to fit snugly round the waist and legs. If you are using a disposable nappy the sticky tabs usually fasten at the front.

# Changing your baby's nappy

- The best place to change a nappy is on a changing mat on the floor
- If you are using a changing table, do not leave your baby unattended. Do not rely on the straps to keep your baby secure and avoid a fall.
- To watch a video showing you how to change your baby's nappy please click on the picture below:



# Nappy hygiene

- Disposable nappies can be rolled up and resealed using the tabs. Place them in a plastic bag in an outside bin.
- Cloth nappies can be machine washed at 60C, or you could use a local nappy laundry service. Check the washing instructions first. Wash nappies that are dirty with poo separately from your other washing.

**Wash your hands after changing a nappy before you do anything else**

# ‘Topping and Tailing’ – Giving your baby a wash

- Use a fresh piece of cotton wool to clean around your baby's ears, but not inside them. Cotton buds should not be used to clean inside your baby's ears.
- Use another piece of cotton wool and water to wipe around your baby's nose and mouth and wash the rest of your baby's face and neck. It is important to pay attention to the neck creases. Dry your baby gently with the towel.
- Wash and dry your baby's hands, paying particular attention to the wrist creases.
- Take off your baby's nappy and wash your baby's bottom and genital area with fresh cotton wool and warm water (please refer to the slide on nappy changing). Dry very carefully, including between the skin folds, and put on a clean nappy.
- ‘Topping and tailing’ is a good opportunity to spend time talking or singing to your baby. It will help your baby to relax if you keep talking while you wash them.

# Taking care of the umbilical cord

**After your baby is born the umbilical cord is clamped and cut. This leaves behind a short cord on your baby's tummy, which will eventually fall off and become your baby's tummy button.**

After about 5 days you will see that your baby's cord stump has changed colour to black and has become shrivelled up and hard. It will then fall off naturally between then and around 2 weeks after birth. When the stump falls off the tummy button will look a little raw but should heal completely within a further 7 to 10 days.



# Taking care of the umbilical cord

- Keep the cord as dry as possible.
- You may wish to use a nappy which has been specifically shaped to fit around the cord, or you can fold down the front of your baby's nappy so you don't cover the cord.
- Keep the cord and area surrounding it clean.
- Let the stump fall off naturally.

## **Sign of infection:**

- an offensive smell
- a pus-like discharge that might be yellow in colour
- the skin around the cord may look red and swollen

**If you notice any signs of infection clean the cord with cool boiled water and cotton wool, making sure you wash your hands first. Contact your midwife or GP for advice.**



# Bathing your baby

Bath your baby when you feel confident to do so. This doesn't have to be during the first few days after they are born. If you prefer to 'top and tail' your baby you can do this every day or as required. Your baby won't need a bath every day, however, if you both enjoy it there is no reason why they shouldn't. Bath time is more enjoyable if you are feeling prepared, and avoid bathing straight after a feed or if your baby is tired and hungry.

## **Be prepared before you begin:**

- Make sure the room is warm.
- Have everything you need ready before you start: a baby bath or clean washing up bowl filled with warm water, two towels, a clean nappy, clean clothes and cotton wool. Plain water is safer for your baby's skin during the first month.
- The water should be warm, not hot. Check it with your wrist or elbow and mix it well so there are no hot patches. You may use a special bath thermometer if you prefer.

# Bathing your baby

- Use plain water to bath your baby for at least the first month. If you need to, you can also use some mild, non-perfumed soap. Avoid skin lotions, medicated wipes or adding cleansers to your baby's bath water.
- Vernix, the white sticky substance that covers your baby's skin while in the womb, should always be left to absorb naturally. It's a natural moisturiser that also protects your baby against infection in the first few days.
- If your baby is overdue, their skin may be dry and cracked. This is because all the protective vernix has been absorbed before they were born. Avoid using creams or lotions on your baby's skin, as they may do more harm than good. Please speak to your midwife if you have any questions or concerns.

# Bathing your baby

- Begin by washing your baby's face (please refer to the 'topping and tailing' slide)
- Undress your baby, but keep their nappy on and wrap your baby in a towel.
- Holding your baby securely under one arm, wash your baby's hair with plain water, supporting them over the bath
- Dry your baby's hair before bathing, to prevent your baby from becoming cold
- Take off your baby's nappy and follow the instructions on the slide 'changing your baby's nappy'
- Lower your baby gently into the bath using one hand to hold their upper arm and support their head and shoulders.
- Use the other hand to gently swish the water over your baby's body making sure you keep your baby's head above the water.
- Lift your baby out of the bath and lie them on a changing mat covered by a dry towel
- Pat your baby dry making sure you pay attention to the creases in their skin.

# Bathing your baby

Please click on the picture below and watch this video showing you how to bath your baby:



**Never leave your baby alone in the bath, not even for a second.**

# More information

There is more information available on our website. Please visit [www.uhs.nhs.uk/maternity](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/maternity) to download the following factsheets:

- Checking your baby is well
- Health assessments for your baby
- Keeping your baby safe
- Registering your baby's birth
- Signs of an unwell baby
- Vitamin K for newborn babies

If you have any questions or concerns please speak to your midwife.

# Useful apps and web pages



[www.bestbeginnings.org.uk](http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk)



[www.tommys.org](http://www.tommys.org)



[www.Bounty.com](http://www.Bounty.com)



[www.italk.org.uk](http://www.italk.org.uk)



[www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk)



<https://mybirthplace.org/wessex>



[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)



[www.what0-18.nhs.uk](http://www.what0-18.nhs.uk)



[www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk](http://www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk)



[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/maternity](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/maternity)