

## How to change a diaper

Changing your baby's diaper can be a tricky part of newborn care. But with practice, you can be a pro.

### What supplies do you need?

- A clean diaper
- Baby wipes or a soft washcloth
- Diaper rash ointment

### How do you change your baby's diaper?

Here's how to change your baby's diaper:

1. Place your baby on a changing table and unfasten her diaper.
2. Hold your baby's ankles with one hand. Lift her legs and bottom and remove her dirty diaper with your other hand.
3. If there's a big mess, use the front, clean part of the diaper to wipe her bottom from front to back.
4. Use diaper wipes or plain water on a soft cloth to gently clean your baby's genitals and bottom. Take extra care with creases and folds in your baby's skin. For baby girls, always wipe from front to back to avoid infection.
5. Pat dry. Apply diaper rash ointment if your baby has a diaper rash. Don't use talcum powder because it can irritate your baby's lungs.
6. Slide a clean diaper under your baby. If you're using a disposable diaper, be sure the sticky tabs to fasten the diaper are behind the baby.
7. Fasten the diaper on both sides of your baby. For a disposable diaper, press the sticky tabs to the front of the diaper.
8. Tuck the new diaper under your baby's umbilical cord until it heals. Make sure the diaper doesn't bunch up between her legs.
9. To prevent accidents, make sure there aren't any diaper openings around her hips.

### How do you diaper your baby boy after a circumcision?

The diapering steps above are good for all babies. But if your baby boy is circumcised:

- For the first few days, put a new bandage on the penis each time you change your baby's diaper.
- Use petroleum jelly on the penis or on the part of the diaper or bandage that touches the penis. This helps prevent the diaper or bandage from sticking to or rubbing against the penis.



Watch videos on how to have a healthy pregnancy at: [marchofdimes.org/videos](http://marchofdimes.org/videos)

March of Dimes materials are for information purposes only and are not to be used as medical advice. Always seek medical advice from your health care provider. Our materials reflect current scientific recommendations at time of publication. Check [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org) for updated information.

## How to bathe your baby

Rub-a-dub-dub, your baby's in the tub!  
Give your baby a bath every 2 to 3 days.  
Bathing him more often can dry out his skin.

If you need to leave the room during bath time, take your baby with you. Babies can drown in just a little water. NEVER leave your baby alone near water!

What supplies do you need for bath time?

- Baby shampoo or soap
- Wash cloths
- Towels
- Clean clothes and diaper
- A small, plastic tub or a sink for a tub bath

How do you give your baby a sponge bath?

A sponge bath is when you clean your baby using a wet washcloth without placing him into water. This helps keep the belly button or circumcision dry for healing.

Here's what to do:

1. Place your baby on a flat surface, like a changing table.
2. Undress him and wrap him in a towel.
3. Use a washcloth in plain water to gently wipe his eyes.
4. Use a soapy washcloth to clean the rest of his body. Wash one area at a time. Clean between skin folds. Keep the rest of him wrapped in a towel so he doesn't get cold.
5. Wash the diaper area last to keep germs from spreading.
6. Rinse him off with plain water and pat him dry.

How do you care for your baby's umbilical cord stump?

Until your baby's umbilical cord stump falls off:

- Tuck her diaper below the stump.
- Keep the area clean and dry. If it gets dirty, clean it with a baby wipe or rubbing alcohol.
- Call her provider if you see signs of infection, like pus or redness, or if she cries when you touch the area.

How do you care for your baby's penis after a circumcision?

Until your baby's penis heals:

- During bath time, wash the penis and diaper area with soap and warm water.
- For the first few days, put a new bandage on the penis each time you change your baby's diaper.
- Use petroleum jelly on the penis or on the part of the diaper or bandage that touches the penis. This helps prevent the diaper or bandage from sticking to or rubbing against the penis.

How do you give your baby a tub bath?

Once your baby's belly button or penis is healed, you can give your baby tub baths.

Here's how:

1. Fill a small tub or a sink with 2 to 3 inches of warm water. Use your elbow to check that the water's not hot.



watch & learn

Watch videos on how to have a healthy pregnancy at: [marchofdimes.org/videos](http://marchofdimes.org/videos)

March of Dimes materials are for information purposes only and are not to be used as medical advice. Always seek medical advice from your health care provider. Our materials reflect current scientific recommendations at time of publication. Check [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org) for updated information.

2. Support her head with one hand and use the other to hold her body as you place her in the tub feet first.
3. Pour warm water over her so that she doesn't get cold.
4. Gently wash her face with plain water.
5. Wash her body with soapy water.
6. Use baby shampoo to wash her head. Be careful not to get shampoo in her eyes.
7. Wash the diaper area last.
8. Rinse her with warm, clean water.
9. Wrap her in a towel and pat her dry.

## Newborn screening and vaccinations

### Newborn screening

Before your baby leaves the hospital, he has some blood taken from his heel. A lab tests the blood for health conditions. Your baby also gets a hearing test and a test for a heart condition called critical congenital heart disease (also called CCHD). All these tests are called newborn screening.

The testing is safe and simple. A health care provider pricks your baby's heel to get a few drops of blood. The blood is then tested in a lab. For the hearing test, the provider puts a small speaker in your baby's ear. The speaker plays soft sounds. The test for CCHD uses a sensor on your baby's foot or finger to check the amount of oxygen in your baby's blood.

These tests tell you if your baby is more likely than other babies to have certain health conditions. Most likely, your baby's test results are normal. If your baby's test results are not OK, it probably just means that he needs more tests. Your provider can tell you if your baby needs more tests or treatment.

All babies in the United States get newborn screening. But each state requires different tests. So ask your baby's health care provider which tests your baby will have.

### Vaccinations

It's never fun to get a shot. But your baby needs some shots to help protect him from diseases like measles, chickenpox and polio. These diseases could make your baby really sick. The shots are called vaccinations. And the medicine in the shots is called a vaccine. When your baby gets these shots, it means he won't get the disease, even if he plays with, sits near or eats with someone who has the disease.

Your baby may get a vaccine for hepatitis B before he leaves the hospital. He gets the rest of his shots at his regular checkups. He keeps getting vaccinations until he's 18 years old.

Go to [marchofdimes.org/babyvaccinations](http://marchofdimes.org/babyvaccinations) to see and print a vaccination schedule from birth through age 6.



*watch & learn*

Watch videos on how to have a healthy pregnancy at: [marchofdimes.org/videos](http://marchofdimes.org/videos)

March of Dimes materials are for information purposes only and are not to be used as medical advice. Always seek medical advice from your health care provider. Our materials reflect current scientific recommendations at time of publication. Check [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org) for updated information.