

TAKING CARE OF YOUR NEWBORN'S SKIN

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ACTIVITY GOAL

The goal of this activity is to help you work with and talk to your baby's healthcare team about taking care of their skin.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

You will learn about:

- Your baby's skin and how it's different from yours
- Creating a skincare routine for your baby
- Giving baths
- Moisturizing, sun protection, and rashes
- Checking bath and skincare product ingredients
- Questions to ask your healthcare team

WebMD Education

Taking Care of Your Newborn's Skin

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Taking Care of Your Newborn's Skin

This article is for the parents and caregivers of babies, or anyone who wants to learn more about taking care of a newborn's skin. The goal of this activity is to help you work with and talk to your baby's healthcare team about taking care of their skin.

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Your Baby's Skin Is Their First Line of Defense

While the saying "soft as a baby's bottom" may be true, your baby's skin is also their first line of defense and has several important jobs to do. This includes acting as a protective barrier against the environment and keeping their body from losing too much moisture.

Helping with this are 3 layers:

- **Epidermis**, the top protective layer
- **Dermis**, the middle layer with oil and sweat glands and supportive connective tissue
- **Hypodermis**, deeper tissue made of fat and connective tissue

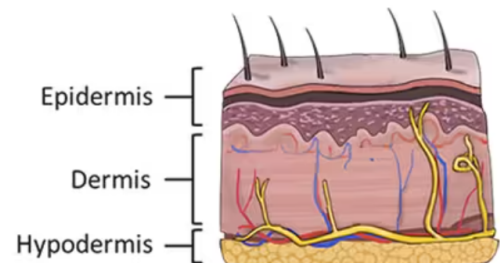
Skin also contains collagen for firmness and shape, and natural fats called lipids that help with keeping moisture in, preventing sun damage, and skin healing.

How Their Skin Is Different Than Yours

While similar to your skin, your newborn's is different in certain ways that can affect how well it acts as a protective barrier.

Compared to adults and older children, their skin has a thinner epidermis, smaller skin cells and thinner collagen fibers with wider spaces in between, and less lipids. This means that moisture can pass through and be lost more easily, making their skin drier, more vulnerable, and harder to protect.

Layers of the Skin



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Newborn Baths

Newborns don't get very dirty, so a bath 2 or 3 times a week is usually enough. Especially since bathing too often can dry out their skin and weaken or damage its barrier.

Newborns should get sponge baths for the first 1 to 3 weeks by:

- Using a bowl of lukewarm water, a soft washcloth, and mild, fragrance-free baby soap
- Wrapping them in a soft towel and placing them on a comfortable, flat surface. Always keep one hand on your baby for safety and never leave them alone
- Washing around their eyes and face with water only. For their body, dip the washcloth in soapy water and gently wipe, rinsing soap off as you go
- Applying a fragrance-free moisturizer to damp skin afterward and gently patting dry



Moisturizers and Emollients

Moisturizers and emollients are an important part of your baby's skincare routine. Moisturizers help add moisture to the skin, while emollients help soften and soothe by moisturizing dry skin, softening cracks, and reducing itching.

Emollients often contain active ingredients such as ceramides (the lipids found in skin) or humectants that help keep water in the skin. Emollients are often used to help protect the outer layer of the skin barrier and, like moisturizers, are best used right after a bath.



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Checking Product Ingredients

When it comes to baby bath and skincare products, remember that less is more -- fragrance-free and dye-free products tend to be better for baby's delicate skin.

When choosing products, it can be a good idea to check the label. "Active ingredients" are those specifically included to address the skin condition, such as dryness. You can also check the "inactive ingredients" where fragrances and dyes are often listed.

Be sure to ask your healthcare team about which products and ingredients they recommend you use or not use on your baby's skin.



Sun Protection and Rashes

For at least their first 6 months, limit your newborn's time in the sun and avoid direct sunlight by using umbrellas, clothing, hats, and sunglasses to help protect them. Ask your baby's healthcare team when and at what age you can start using baby sunscreen on their skin and which products they recommend.

You can also ask about any rashes and other skin conditions that may happen. Many rashes that babies get are harmless and go away on their own, but others may be more serious. Ask about how to recognize rashes and manage them and when to call your healthcare team about any skin conditions.



Questions to Ask Your Baby's Healthcare Team

Questions you can ask about taking care of your baby's skin can include:

- What skincare routine do you recommend, including proper bathing and bath and skincare products?
- What ingredients should we use or avoid?
- How can I protect my newborn from the sun and at what age should we start using sunscreen?
- What should I look for as far as rashes or other skin conditions and how should we manage them?

