**FOI Ref: 6542**

**Category(ies): Clinical – Service Activity**

**Subject: Infant Skincare**

**Date Received: 03/08/2022**

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| **Your request:** | **Our response:** |
| I would like to make the following freedom of information request to your NHS Trust:    |
| 1. What antenatal advice does the trust routinely give to mothers about infant skincare including the bathing of babies?
 | Often discussed as part of the birth and personalised care planning:For a Well Term BabyTo prevent hypothermia the first bath should be delayed until the baby has a stable temperature. Delaying the first bath for 2-3 days helps with skin colonisation and development of the skin mantle.The bath water should be maintained at 37°C. To ensure that this is achieved the water temperature could be measured using a bath thermometer. |
| 1. What postpartum advice does the trust routinely give to mothers about infant skincare including the bathing of babies?
 | **Main recommendations:*** Leave vernix caseosa to absorb into the skin – do not rub it off – *routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward*
* Only bath a preterm baby or a baby who has been ill when he/she is physiologically stable – *discussed as appropriate*
* If necessary, bath a ‘well’ baby when his/her temperature has been within an acceptable range for 2-4 hours after birth, but preferably delay the first bath until the 2nd or 3rd day of life to assist with skin maturation. - *routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward/community*
* Ensure temperature of bath water is maintained at 37oC. Use a bath thermometer if able – *routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward/community*
* Avoid baby toiletries and other cleansing products until the baby is at least a month old – use plain water to cleanse baby’s skin. – *routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward/community*
* Only bath baby 2-3 times a week – ‘top and tail’ in-between bathing. – *routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward/community*
* Expose nappy area as often as possible and consider a thin layer of barrier ointment in nappy area to protect the stratum corneum – ensure ointment is preservative-free and does not contain antiseptic, fragrance or colourings. - *routinely discussed at NIPE*
* Avoid the use of ointments / lotions to improve condition of new-born skin. *Routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward/community and at NIPE*
* Ensure the umbilical cord is kept clean and dry, allowing it to be exposed to air as frequently as possible. *Routinely discussed on labour ward/PN ward/community and at NIPE*
* Encourage the mother/parent to have Skin to Skin care for a minimum of 1-hour post-birth as this contributes to colonisation of the skin – *routine for all where baby is well enough*
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| Please let us know if you do not routinely give advice about this. If your trust has several hospitals and the advice differs at each hospital, please answer each question for each hospital. Your midwifery team and/or obstetrics team are likely to be able to help with this request. If you do not have a midwifery or obstetrics team, please let us know.    |