



Why we wait to bathe newborns.

It used to be standard procedure to whisk newborns away from their mothers in order to bathe them. Research now shows babies are better off when they are allowed to cuddle with their moms before getting that first bath.*

Please read this brochure to learn about the advantages of waiting for the first bath. Unless you ask us to bathe your baby sooner, we will delay the bath until you and your baby have spent some time together.

Everyone on our delivery team will wear gloves when caring for your unbathed baby. Studies have shown it protects babies from common viruses and infections, and it also protects us from exposure to body fluids, such as amniotic fluid and blood.

Our goal is to help you welcome your baby with the healthiest start possible.

*Much of the research on bathing newborns is related to preterm or low-birth-weight babies.

Women and Children's Services at:

San Pedro

Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center San Pedro
1300 West 7th St.

Tel: 310-832-3311

Torrance

Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance
4101 Torrance Blvd.

Tel: 310-540-7676

OUR MISSION

As expressions of God's healing love, witnessed through the ministry of Jesus, we are steadfast in serving all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable.

OUR CORE VALUES

Compassion, Dignity, Justice, Excellence, Integrity.

providence.org/southbay
888-HEALING (432-5464)



We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in our health programs and activities.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 888-311-9127 (TTY: 711).

注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 888-311-9127 (TTY: 711)。



Waiting for the first bath



The benefits of waiting

A natural skin protectant

Before they are born, babies are protected from their watery environment by vernix, a white, waxy cream on their skin.

Think of vernix as a natural antibacterial ointment. It contains proteins that prevent common bacterial infections. Vernix is a wonderful moisturizer, keeping your baby's skin soft and supple.

Amniotic fluid, which bathed your baby before birth, also provides extra resistance to infection.

Research indicates that the longer these substances remain on your baby's skin, the better it is for the baby's immune system.

Improved body temperature

Newborns do not know how to maintain stable body temperatures. When babies are taken from their mothers right after they're born, they must work hard to keep their body temperature in the normal range. Adding a bath into the mix makes it even harder for them.

Your chest is the perfect place for your baby. It can heat up or cool down, whatever is needed to keep your baby comfortable. By delaying your baby's first bath and holding the infant against your chest, you can help stabilize your baby's body temperature and avoid a chill.

Lower stress, stable blood sugar

Being separated from their mothers is very stressful for newborns. When they are taken away to get a bath, most newborns cry. Crying releases stress hormones. Stress hormones cause the blood sugar to drop. When blood sugar drops, a baby can become too sleepy to breast feed.

By cuddling your baby, you will create a more soothing, less stressful environment. This will help regulate your baby's body systems and stabilize his or her blood sugar.

Comfort and feeding

Regardless of how you choose to feed your baby, snuggling on your chest will be a source of comfort for your newborn. Here your baby will be close to his or her food source and will be able to hear you, smell you and feel you. Studies show babies are more successful at breast-feeding when they are put skin-to-skin with their moms right after delivery and not taken immediately away for medical procedures or bathing.

Snuggling your baby between your bare breasts will not only help to warm and soothe the baby, but it will give your baby a chance to find your breast, latch on and start nursing.

Mother-baby bonding

The first hour after birth is a special time for babies and their parents. This is when they meet each other for the first time. Experts recommend that nothing should interrupt this time together.

As long as you and your baby do not need help breathing or need immediate medical care, we will encourage you to hold your newborn skin-to-skin after the birth. Even if you have a C-section, you may enjoy skin-to-skin contact with your baby after delivery and in the recovery room. The first bath can occur after this special bonding time.

Enjoy the bath when you're ready.

When you've had time to recover from the delivery, you and your partner can participate in your baby's first bath. This will be an opportunity to learn together about your baby and to get tips from our expert nurses on bathing and newborn care.



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