



## **Bathing** highlights from the AWHONN 2018 Neonatal Skin Care Evidenced-Based Clinical Practice Guideline

- The Guideline recommends, “Ideally, infants should be bathed with immersion tub bathing or swaddled immersion bathing.”
- Bathing equipment can be a transmission source of hospital-acquired infections if basins are shared among patients. Clean and disinfect between patients.
- For full term infants, delay the first bath until their temperature is  $\geq 36.8^{\circ}$  on 2 consecutive measurements and infant is between 6 and 24 hours old. If mother is HIV+, bathe infant right after birth.
- No differences in cord healing, bacterial colonization of the cord, or cord infection between tub bathing and sponge bathing for healthy, term infants.
- Ideal bath water temperature ranges from  $38^{\circ}\text{C}$  to less than  $40^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $100^{\circ}\text{F}$  to less than  $104^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). Consider a thermometer to accurately measure temperature.
- Special considerations for preterm infants:
  - Postpone bath until thermal and cardiorespiratory stability and at least 6 hours, ideally 12-24 hours after birth.
  - Consider weight, gestational age and severity of illness prior to bathing.
  - Carefully consider the need for bathing for infants  $<1500\text{g}$ .
  - Attention to reducing stress and maintaining body temperature
    - Swaddled immersion bathing, hand containment, avoid distractions
  - Some infant post-bath recovery options
    - Skin-to-skin holding, swaddling, nesting, dressing, undisturbed time, radiant warmer

AWHONN (2018) *Neonatal Skin Care Evidence-based Clinical Practice Guideline* 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

Early Experiences Matter