

## Notice for site visitors

Family Assist in West Sussex will be closing in August due to changes in the way people are accessing their information, and the Family Assist online pages will be taken down.

We are keen to ensure that everyone who has used Family Assist knows how to access the help and support they need.

Visit our [FAQ page \(https://west-sussex-family-assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/409\)](https://west-sussex-family-assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/409) for how to access information previously provided by Family Assist. If you have registered for Family Assist mailings, you will have recently received an email with more information.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have used Family Assist and we hope that you have found the information provided helpful and of benefit to you and your family.



*Thank you for printing our content at  
[www.westsussex.gov.uk/familyassist](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/familyassist). Please  
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digital content.*

## Bathing and washing your baby

Published 03/01/2019 12:48 | Updated 15/12/2021 01:27 |

***Information on Family Assist to support you after the birth of your baby will not be reviewed again until 2022. If you have any questions about postnatal information here, please speak to your Health Visitor.***

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It's a good idea to have everything to hand before you get started and choosing a time when your **baby** is content and relaxed is the ideal time. Location is also important, and you should ensure that the room is warm to prevent your **baby** getting too cold.

You will need the following things:

- a bowl of warm water,
- a towel,
- some cotton wool,
- a fresh nappy,
- clean clothes (if necessary), and
- a changing mat.

## Topping and tailing, step by step

Every time you wash your **baby**, keep talking to them as this will help them to relax. Talking to your **baby** helps them get used to listening to you and begin to understand what you are saying.

1. Place your **baby** on a changing mat or if you find it easier, you can hold them on your knee. Undress them, leaving their vest and nappy, and wrap them in a towel to keep warm.
2. Start with your baby's eyes. Dipping the cotton wool in the warm water, being careful not to make it too wet, gently wipe around their eyes, from the nose outwards. Be sure to use a fresh piece of cotton wool for each eye to prevent any possible infection transferring from one eye to the other.
3. Now move on to the ears. Again, using a fresh piece of cotton wool, clean around your baby's ears, but not inside them. You should never use cotton buds to clean inside your baby's ears.

5. Next remove your baby's nappy and, using fresh cotton wool and warm water, gently wash your baby's genitals and then their bottom. Dry them with the towel, taking care in particular between the skin folds, and put on a clean nappy.

## Safety when bathing

Although you don't need to **bathe** newborn **babies** every day, there's no reason why you can't if your **baby** enjoys it.

It's a good idea to ensure that your **baby** is not hungry or tired and you should always wait a little while after a feed. It's important to keep your **baby** warm so again, make sure that the room that you are **bathing** them in is not cold.

Here is a list of the things you need to have ready before you begin:

- a **baby bath** or clean washing up bowl filled with warm water,
- two towels,
- a clean nappy,
- a clean change of clothes,
- a changing mat, and
- some cotton wool.

It is important that the water you are using to **bathe** your **baby** is warm, not hot. Mixing the water well will prevent there being any hot spots. Use your wrist or elbow to check the temperature. In the first month, don't be tempted to use any liquid cleansers when **bathing** your **baby**, plain water is best for now. It is a good idea to keep a towel on your lap whilst washing and **bathing** your **baby** so that you have it to hand and within easy reach.

1. Start by placing your **baby** on the changing mat or on your knee and clean their face using the methods explained above.

3. Gently dry their hair with the towel, remove your baby's nappy, and clean their bottom to remove any mess.
4. Slowly and gently lower your **baby** into the water using one hand to support their bottom and the other to support their shoulders and neck.
5. Keep your hand supporting the baby's head, neck, and shoulders above the water and with your other hand, gently and without splashing, move the water around and over your baby's body.
6. Never, leave your **baby** alone in the **bath**, not even for a second.
7. Slowly lift your **baby** out of the water, again supporting their bottom with one hand and their head neck and shoulders with the other. Pat them dry with the towel, paying particular attention to the folds and creases of their skin.
8. Now is a good opportunity to massage your **baby** as this will help them to relax and sleep but again, don't be tempted to use lotions or oils until your **baby** is over a month old. For more information on **baby** massage, [click here \(//west-sussex-family-assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/183\)](https://west-sussex-family-assist.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/183) .
9. Some **babies** can be frightened of **bathing** and it sometimes helps for you to **bathe** together, taking care not to make the water too hot. Always ask someone else to hold your **baby** while you get in and out of the **bath**.

You may need to cut your baby's fingernails from time to time. You can buy nail clippers or round headed nail scissors for **babies** from many high street stores. Some people find it a little daunting to cut their baby's nails so as an alternative to using clippers or scissors, you could try filing them down with a fine emery board instead.

