

# Dad's - jump in the bath with your baby.

Dad, let's talk about bathtime with your little one. Bathing your newborn is one of those parenting hacks that just works, in all sorts of ways. Bathtime is fun, relaxing, playful and focused. It's just you and your baby, enjoying a moment together. It's a wonderful bonding experience.

Researchers believe the combination of warm water and touch leads to the release of the hormone oxytocin in babies, which promotes bonding.

Bathing with your newborn is a beautiful experience. Don't let a mix of lack of confidence, information, and encouragement stop you.

## Sharing bath time together has lots of benefits:

- **It is relaxing for both you and your baby. You get to soak in the bath while enjoying some skin to skin with your little one**
- **It can be a lovely winding down period for both of you, especially after a busy or unsettled day and may even help with bedtime routines**

Of course, bathing with your baby is a whole different ball game from sudsing up solo. Some things to keep in mind:

- Wait until they are at least a week old. Your baby's skin is covered by a waxy substance called vernix. Vernix could help prevent your newborn's skin from becoming dry. It's high water content helps lock moisture into the skin and reduces moisture loss. It may have antibacterial properties. Vernix could protect your newborn baby from getting a skin infection shortly after birth.
- Make sure the water is just right. It should be body temperature or a tiny bit warmer (37 celsius is ideal - your elbow works well, use a thermometer if you're not sure).
- Gather everything you'll need **before** you get into the bath, including any items you'll use to bathe your baby (body wash, shampoo, washcloths, towels). If you forget something, skip it or take your baby with you if you must have it now. Never, never leave your baby alone in the bath, not even for a second.
- Step into the water before your baby. Do not try to climb into the (slippery) bath while holding your (slippery) little one. Place them in their bouncy seat or on a towel beside the bath, get in yourself, and then reach over for them. Better yet, have your partner hand them to you.
- Get a grip. If your bath doesn't have a nonslip mat, lay one down now so that you don't slide around - a large towel may work too, and keep both hands on them at all times. One way you may want to hold them is by bending your knees and letting your little one recline against your thighs facing you.
- Keep them warm. Use a plastic cup to pour water over your baby's body from time to time — that'll keep them from getting chilly.
- Don't be afraid to hold them, use this time to make eye contact, sing, talk - they love hearing your voice and it will help with their language development in the months and years to come.
- Make a safe exit. When baby bathtime is over, reverse the steps you followed to get into the bath. Place your baby into the bouncy or tuck a towel around them and place them on the floor beside you or hand her to someone else before you get out.



### **A note for Mums:**

Don't hover! Be sure to let your partner do things and learn his own way. It can be easy to micromanage parenting your little one. We have to let our partners find their own way, and oftentimes, the only way that can happen naturally is by giving them some space. It can be intimidating to try to learn something with someone watching every move!

We intuitively know that we cannot do it all and it's good to let people learn on their own. But, I also know how hard it can be for a new mum to relinquish control. So, I'm reminding you again, mama, how important it is to encourage and support your partner to bond with your little one from Day 1!

I promise that 9 months down the road when putting your baby to sleep doesn't feel like rainbows and butterflies, you'll be so thankful that Dad knows how to soothe the baby just as well as you can. Parenting is a marathon, not a sprint. There's enough to go around for the both of you.

**That's it. Not too complicated. The real beauty of bathing with your baby is that it's an experience you can share for months to come. Of course, by then, taking a bath with your little one will be more about water play than snuggling, but that's okay. You got this!**

