

# How to top and tail a newborn

Some babies love having a bath, for other babies it can take some time to get used to it. For the first few weeks or so, you may want to top and tail baby instead. Our step-by-step guide to cleaning newborns starts at the top and ends at the tip of their toes.

- ✧ You don't need to wash your baby every day - for the first few weeks it may be easier to top and tail instead.
- ✧ Top and tailing is where you carefully wash the face, neck, hands and bottom.
- ✧ You will need a bowl of cooled, boiled water, a bowl of warm water, cotton wool or cotton pads, a fresh nappy, clean clothes and clean towels.
- ✧ Wash your hands thoroughly and remove any rings or bracelets.
- ✧ Make sure the room is nice and warm - undress your baby, and place them on a clean towel.
- ✧ Topping means washing your baby's face, neck and hands.
- ✧ Babies' eyes can be a little sticky after birth. Dip cotton wool or a cotton pad in cool boiled water and gently wipe your baby's eyes from the nose outwards, using a new piece of cotton wool for each eye.
- ✧ Use a fresh piece of cotton wool dipped in warm water to clean around your baby's ears, avoiding the inside.
- ✧ Wash the rest of your baby's face, neck and hands in the same way.
- ✧ If your baby still has vernix (the creamy white layer) in their creases, leave it there as it helps the skin barrier to develop.
- ✧ Keep your baby's umbilical cord stump clean and dry to avoid infection - wipe it with fresh cotton wool dipped in cooled boiled water each day and gently pat it dry.



- ✧ The umbilical cord stump should drop off after about 10 days - if you have any concerns talk to your midwife.
- ✧ Tailing means cleaning your baby's genitals and bottom.
- ✧ Remove nappy and wash baby's bottom and genital area with fresh cotton wool and warm water.
- ✧ If you prefer use baby wipes, but make sure they are unperfumed and suitable for newborns.
- ✧ Gently pat your baby dry paying particular attention to the skin folds, before putting on a clean nappy.
- ✧ Dress baby in clean clothes. Newborns lose heat quickly so you may also want to use a blanket.