Skincare for term babies guideline (GL915)

Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval Group</th>
<th>Job Title, Chair of Committee</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternity &amp; Children’s Service Clinical Governance Committee</td>
<td>Chair, Maternity Clinical Governance Committee</td>
<td>8th May 2015</td>
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Change History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author, job title</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>Trust requirement</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<td>Reviewed</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>Dec 2012</td>
<td>A Weavers (Consultant midwife), S Hunter (Midwife)</td>
<td>Reviewed</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>Mar 2015</td>
<td>A Weavers (Consultant midwife)</td>
<td>Reviewed – no changes</td>
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Overview:

The vulnerability of a newborn’s skin creates the potential for a number of skin complaints. Infant skin differs from adult skin and continues to develop throughout the first year of life. Limited information is available concerning regimens that maintain or enhance the neonatal skin barrier. However, skin cleansing is important to keep skin free of unwanted irritants and recent studies suggest water alone is not sufficient in cleansing the skin.

- Following birth, vernix should be left on the skin to absorb naturally.
- A baby comb can be used to remove debris from hair in place of using shampoo.
- It is advisable not to clean the eyes unless indicated. If sticky, clean with sterile or cooled, boiled water and use a clean piece of cotton wool for each eye.
- Neonatal skin is considerably drier than adult skin after birth. Emollients can be used to help rehydrate the skin, but they should be free from Sodium Docecyl Sulphate (SDS), which are found in domestic cleaning products.
- Current NICE guidelines recommend the use of water to cleanse newborn skin. However, the use of water alone has been shown to raise the skin pH, particularly in hard water areas, which can compromise the skin barrier.
- Water alone is a poor cleanser and does not remove the fat soluble substances found in meconium, which are then left on the skin. Depending on the frequency of bathing, washing with water alone can have a drying effect on the skin. So what should be recommended?
- NICE recommend that medicated baby wipes should be avoided. However, research has shown that Johnson’s Extra Sensitive wipes are just as safe and hydrating to the skin as water. The findings also demonstrated a slight reduction in the occurrence of nappy rash when cleaning with these wipes.
- Caution should be advised with applying products with preterm infants as the skin’s protective barrier is underdeveloped, takes longer to mature and is easily injured.
- Olive oil should NOT be recommended for the prevention or treatment of dry skin. There is no evidence to support this practice. Olive oil has a high oleic acid content that is detrimental to the integrity of the skin barrier. Oil that has high linolenic content should be advised instead, such as Safflower Oil, Grape seed oil or Sunflower oil. These oils are more stable, less inclined to degrade and will not clog the pores.
References


Written by: Annette Weavers (consultant midwife) January 2006
Reviewed: April 2009, December 2012 (A Weavers, Serena Hunter), March 2015 (A Weavers)
Review due: May 2017