Delayed Infant Bathing to Deliver Best Patient Outcomes
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Background

- Traditionally, infants at our institution received a sponge bath under a radiant warmer immediately after birth. This approach led to decreased body temperatures, lowered body temperatures. Babies who were bathed this way were more likely to require skin-to-skin contact to assist with their thermoregulatory system.
- After our institution began the initiative to delay the bath for 24 hours, we observed increased family participation in skin-to-skin contact, increased family satisfaction, and prevention of hypothermia.
- Evidence from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) indicates that delaying the bath can provide a variety of benefits for both the mother and baby.

Evidence Synthesis

- A search was conducted using CINAHL, PubMed, and Nursing Reference Center databases.
- 5 Level 1 evidence supporting delaying the bath for 24 hours to prevent hypothermia and to promote breastfeeding.

Implementation

- Data collection methodologies are used to monitor and determine what is best for the baby and family, focusing on the prevention of hypothermia and the promotion of breastfeeding.
- A care plan for a system-dependent implementing delayed bathing has been developed for monitoring temperature changes and maintaining skin-to-skin contact.
- Collaboration with leadership is ongoing in the mother-baby unit to ensure a smooth transition to life on the outside.
- € Physician education related to delaying the bath has been provided.

Selected References


Selected References


Outcomes

- Skin-to-Skin Contact: 100%
- Family Bathing Participation: 89%
- Infant Temperature Stability: 99.8%
- Family Bathing Satisfaction: 99%
- Staff Nurse Satisfaction: 97%

5 Reasons to Delay Baby’s First Bath

1. Babies are born with a special skin protectant called vernix. Research indicates that vernix has protective properties and leaves it on your baby’s skin provides a layer of protection against infections. Vernix is not harmful but can be irritating if left where it is not needed.
2. Lowered body temperatures. Babies can become hypothermic when they are bathed immediately after birth. Bathing their baby in warm water can cause their temperature to drop faster than sponge bathing. It also helps to keep their body temperature in the normal range.
3. Immersion bath. Bathing your baby in warm water can be a soothing experience for both you and your baby. This can make it easier for them to become comfortable with skin-to-skin contact.
4. A bath with soap or water-based rinse. We want you to be confident in your baby’s bath as a learning opportunity where you are able to participate and ask questions so you are more confident when you take your baby home.
5. Skin-to-skin can be a wonderful bonding experience for you and your baby. It also helps to promote breastfeeding and support the baby making a smooth transition to life on the outside.
Background

- Traditionally, infants at our institution received a sponge bath under a radiant warmer one hour after birth if vital signs were stable and then transferred to the post-partum unit at approximately two hours of life.
- The time frame chosen was based on the belief that the babies needed a bath as soon as possible.
- Evidence from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Save the Children began to be published over a decade ago indicating that delaying the bath would promote temperature stability and exclusive breastfeeding.
- As our institution began the initiative to become a Baby Friendly hospital, we began to investigate delayed bathing as an intervention to promote best practice.

Clinical Question

- For healthy full-term newborns, does delaying the first bath for 24 hours and performing an immersion bath compared to sponge bath, result in decreased incidence of hypothermia, increased family satisfaction, increased family participation in the bath, and increased incidence of skin-to-skin contact in the first day of life?
Evidence Obtained

- A search was conducted using CINAHL, PubMed, and Nursing Reference Center that yielded:
  - 5 Level 1 studies
  - WHO guideline
  - Association for Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nursing (AWHONN) presentation
- All evidence located strongly supported delaying the bath for up to 24 hours to prevent hypothermia and to promote breastfeeding
- Additional evidence found to support immersion bathing

Parent Education

5 Reasons to Delay Baby’s First Bath:

1. Babies are born with a special skin protectant called vernix
2. Baby wants to be near mom
3. Hypothermia leading to hypoglycemia
4. Immersion bath
5. A bath with mom or dad sounds nice.
Implementation

- Pre and Post implementation data obtained:
  - Infant temperature pre-bath
  - 30 minutes after the bath
  - At transfer to the mother-baby unit
  - Blood glucose levels when indicated
  - Family and nurse satisfaction levels
- Negotiations regarding the re-assignment of responsibilities through a Rapid Improvement Event
- A site visit to a system hospital
- Production of an informational flyer for families stressing the benefits of skin-to-skin contact and the purpose of delayed bathing
- Education of nurses, physicians & patient care technicians
- Immersion bathing initiated in NICU

Current Outcomes

- Sample of 414 patients/families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric Measured</th>
<th>Current Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skin-to-Skin Contact</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Bathing Participation</td>
<td>99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Satisfaction Delayed Bathing</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Staff Nurse Satisfaction</td>
<td>90%</td>
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Conclusion

• Current data at our center indicates that delaying the bath 8-24 hours is supported by families and health care professionals.

• To date, there have been no NICU admissions due to hypothermia or hypoglycemia resulting from temperature instability.

• Satisfaction scores are remaining above 93% since implementing delayed bathing.

• Exclusive breastfeeding rates continue to increase monthly since implementation.