

## BATH AND SKIN CARE

Use a mild soap or baby preparation for bathing. Until the naval cord is healed you should just sponge bathe your infant. It is no longer necessary to clean the umbilical cord with alcohol. Alcohol decreases the effectiveness of the blue dye applied to the cord. We now recommend the cord remain dry until it separates in two to three weeks. If the cord is moist after one week, you may use alcohol periodically. You may notice several drops of blood when this occurs. Do not be alarmed unless the bleeding persists for more than twenty-four hours.

After the navel has healed you may begin to give him tub baths. Never leave your baby unattended in water. He does not need to be washed daily. In fact, washing him too frequently may dry out his skin. Many infants will have "dry skin" which is quite normal for the first month of life. We do not recommend using baby powder or baby oil.

Mild diaper rashes are generally caused by a combination of urine and stool being left on the skin. When a rash occurs, change diapers frequently to prevent skin contact with stool. Rinse baby's skin with plenty of warm water with each diaper change. Use a mild soap (Dove) only after BM's and avoid diaper wipes. A protective ointment such as Vaseline, A&D, or Desitin may be helpful. Call during office hours if the rash spreads beyond the diaper area or fails to improve within three days of therapy.

### SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING BATHING THE NEW BABY

- (A) **Head** – Lather and scrub the head well, including the soft spot.
- (B) **Eyes** – Eyes should be wiped out daily to prevent the buildup of the normally present mucous.
- (C) **Ears** – Cleanse only the outer areas with a soft cloth and water. There is no need to use a Q-tip or other cotton swabs.
- (D) **Genitals** – If you have decided to have your son circumcised, the penis will not be completely healed by the time you take him home. You should wash the penis with soap and water and then cover with a coating of Vaseline. If your boy is not circumcised, do not forcibly retract his foreskin. We will talk about care of his penis at his first checkup in two to three weeks. The female genitalia should always be wiped from front to back with a wet cotton ball or cloth.