

# Improving Thermoregulation in Infants by Delaying the First Bath.

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# Improving Thermoregulation in Infants by Delaying the First Bath

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## Background/ Evidence

- It has been found that delaying the newborn bath leads to better maintenance of temperature, more efficient breastfeeding rates, and more effective management of glucose levels (Sobel et. Al, 2011).
- It also promotes bonding time with mothers, decreases the incidence of NICU transfers, and improves skin integrity (Sobel et. Al, 2011).
- One study found that “early bathing contributes significantly to heat loss and increases the incidence of hypothermia in cold climates and even in a warm environment and should be postponed until at least after the first 6 hours of life, and possibly longer” (Lunze, 2013).
- On the mother-baby unit at LVH-Cedar Crest, a standard protocol has not been implemented regarding the timing of a well baby’s first bath.

## PICO

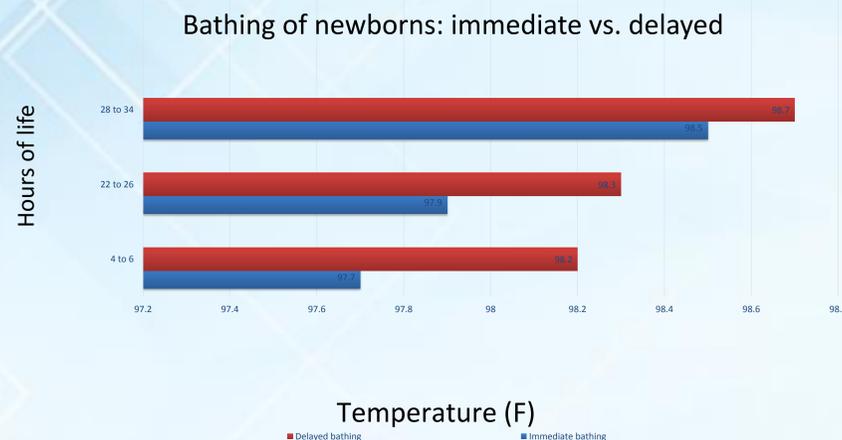
- In the well baby population, does delaying the newborn bath for 24 hours compared to immediate bathing improve thermoregulation?
- **P** – Well baby **I**- Delaying bath **C** – Immediate bath **O** - Thermoregulation

## Methods

- Staff notified of change in newborn bathing routine via meeting during morning huddle and email.
- Babies were divided into two separate groups: a control group that will receive immediate baths and an experimental group that will receive baths after 24 hours.
- Well babies had a temperature taken between 3 time frames (4-6 hours, 22-26 hours, and 28-34 hours).
- Exclusions included infants born to Hepatitis C and HIV + mothers, newborns born small for gestational age (SGA) or large for gestational age (LGA), and infants born to gestational diabetic (GDM) mothers.
- An information sheet containing the benefits of delaying a newborn’s first bath was provided in every admission folder.

## Outcomes/Results

- A total of 100 babies were included in the study; 50 of which were immediately bathed and 50 of which had their bath delayed.
- Data collection suggests that newborns bathed immediately following birth had increased incidence of lower temperatures than newborns bathed after 24 hours of life.
- Babies that were immediately bathed had an average temperature of 97.7 degrees F, while babies whose bathing was delayed had an average temperature of 98.2 in the first 4-6 hours of life.
- Babies that had their bath delayed 24 hours were not admitted to NICU for thermoregulation issues, while there was one NICU admission in newborns that were immediately bathed due to thermoregulation issues.



## Conclusions

- The outcome of this evidence based research project suggests that it would benefit newborns if our Mother-Baby unit made it a policy to delay the first bath for 24 hours.
- Future barriers that will need to be overcome and were encountered during this study include; nurses unwilling to participate and concerns about the cleanliness of the baby by the family.
- We hope that in completing this study the delayed bath can become a standard protocol as it can also lower the rate of NICU transfers due to low temperatures.
- Results of this project will be shared among the network in hopes of continued research.
- In future studies, it may be beneficial to measure the impact of delaying the first bath on breastfeeding success rates, NICU transfers, and mother-infant bonding.

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