Baby skin and hair care tips

Children's Wisconsin

African American or Black

African American babies need special care for their hair and skin. Over-washing can strip away the natural oils and leave their hair dry, brittle and frizzy. Sensitive skin can get dry very quickly.

Skin Care
How often should I bathe my baby?
- 1 to 2 times per week.
- Wipe with warm washcloth, without soap, daily. Be sure to wash face and skin folds.
- Pay attention to baby's skin. If products cause problems like rashes or itching, stop using right away. Switch to "fragrance free" soaps and call their provider.

What works best on my baby's skin?
These products can be found at most drug and retail stores. Many families use Johnson's® baby products. Ask your provider if you have any questions about specific brands.
- Baby oil.
- Baby lotion.
- Vaseline. It is thick. Use only a thin layer.
- You can mix all 3 products together after baths or daily cares.

Hair Care
How do I care for my baby's hair?
- Once a week, wash hair and towel dry.
- If you notice child's hair is naturally oily, wash twice a week instead of once a week.
- Apply a pea or dime size amount of castor or coconut oil on baby's damp hair.
- Apply a small amount of oil or cream moisturizer to help detangle the hair.
- Comb out the tangles carefully to prevent breakage. Use a wide-tooth comb or soft-bristle brush. Since some African American hair is kinky, it tangles easily.
- You may apply castor or coconut oil to hair throughout the week to moisturize wet or dry hair if hair or scalp appears dry.
- Never try to comb out kinky hair when it's dry.
- Never use rubber bands; use stretchy cloth bands. Never wear barrettes or pony tail holders to bed.

What products work best on my baby's hair?
- Washing
  - Baby shampoo (like Johnson's).
- Moisturizing
  - Baby castor oil or coconut oil.
  - Baby lotion. This can also be used when styling.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.