

Baby wipes as safe as using water, study finds

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New research has found that a brand of baby wipes is just as safe and hydrating as using water alone on newborn skin, suggesting official guidance may need updating.

The University of Manchester study, published in BioMed Central's open-access journal *BMC Paediatrics*, compared Johnson's Baby Extra Sensitive Wipes against cotton wool and water on 280 newborn babies split into two groups over a three-year period.

Despite advice from the UK's National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) that mums should use water alone on [newborns](#), the study found that the Johnson's wipes were as effective and as safe as water and hydrated babies' skin just as well.

Tina [Lavender](#), Professor of Midwifery at the University's School of Nursing, [Midwifery](#) and [Social Work](#) and study lead, said: "Baby wipes can be much more convenient for [parents](#), especially when on the go, but current NICE guidelines recommend using cotton wool and water.

"Our research, looking at one high street baby wipe, wanted to test whether the product was as safe and effective on newborn babies' skins as water alone to see if midwives could help give parents more options than current guidelines provide."

The study, funded by Johnson & Johnson, the makers of Johnson's Baby but carried out under strict, independent scientific protocols, including

blind testing and peer review, showed the company's product was as safe and effective as using water. There was a slight, though not statistically significant, reduction in the occurrence of nappy rash using the Johnson's wipe.

Professor Lavender added: "Parents can now be confident that using this specific baby wipe, proven in the largest randomised clinical trial conducted in newborn cleansing, is equivalent to water alone. Our trial provides us with the strongest evidence available so far that we shouldn't base our practice on tradition alone and that NICE needs to look at its current guidelines.

"For the first time, we now have a robust, adequately-powered study that can be used in practice, the results of which should be adopted by our national guidelines. These results should provide healthcare professionals with much needed evidence-based information, giving them the option to support the skin-care cleansing regime best suited to individual parents and their newborn babies."

More information: 'Effect on skin hydration of using baby wipes to clean the napkin area of newborn babies: assessor-blinded randomised controlled equivalence trial,' *BMC Paediatrics* June 1, 2012.

Provided by University of Manchester

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