

Baby wash does not damage baby's skin barrier function, study finds

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The findings by academics at The University of Manchester, published in the *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing*, compared Johnson's Baby Top-to-Toe wash against plain bath water on 307 newborn babies over a four week period.

The findings challenge the current advice from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines, that baby wash should be avoided in the first 6 weeks after birth.

Newborn [skin](#) is different to adult skin. The skin barrier on newborn [babies](#) is less mature and likely to be more vulnerable to environmental threats. But the study found no difference in transepidermal water loss (TEWL), which indicates the amount of water that escapes from the skin, between [newborns](#) bathed in water alone or with the wash product. Skin hydration increased in the wash product group compared to water alone when a babies' hydration at two weeks was analysed.

Project lead Professor Dame Tina Lavender said this offered reassurance that the wash product was not affecting the infant's natural skin barrier integrity.

Professor Lavender, Professor of Midwifery at The University of Manchester, said: "Whilst internationally it has been accepted that appropriate cleansing practices are important, a dearth of good quality clinical trials has led to variations in baby skin care regimens. However, women can now be confident that using this specific baby cleansing

product on newborn skin is equivalent to bathing in water alone.

"This trial adds to the existing but limited evidence in the area and provides healthcare professionals with the strongest level of evidence available to date. Therefore we should no longer base our practice on tradition and experience alone. We should share the evidence from this study with parents, so they are able to make their own informed choices."

This research follows another recently published study conducted by The University of Manchester in which the use of Johnson's Baby Extra Sensitive Wipes was found to be equivalent to the use of water and cotton wool in terms of skin hydration. Mums taking part in the study also reported nappy rash as being higher in the [water](#) and cotton wool group.

The findings from both studies should offer reassurance to parents who choose to use these particular baby cleansing products. "These results should provide healthcare professionals and parents with much needed evidence-based information giving them the option to support the skin care cleansing regime chosen by individual parents for their newborn babies," Professor Lavender added.

Provided by University of Manchester

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