

Daily baths not a must for kids

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(HealthDay)—Here's welcome news for parents tired of forcing their kids to take a daily bath: Children may not need to bathe every day after all.

That's the word from Dr. Robert Sidbury, an associate professor with the department of pediatrics and division chief of dermatology at the University of Washington School of Medicine in St. Louis.

"Depending on their age and activity level, most children only need a bath a few times a week," Sidbury said in a news release from the American Academy of Dermatology. "For children, a few germs here and there are healthy, as this is how their bodies learn to fight off bacteria and build stronger immune systems."

Sidbury provides these recommendations about bathing for kids:

- If a child is aged 6 to 11, only two or three baths a week may be needed, and shampooing is necessary just once or twice a week. Black children or kids of any age with dry or [curly hair](#) only need to shampoo once every seven to 10 days.
- Special circumstances require more bathing: Kids should take a bath and wash their hair when they get dirty, after they've been in an ocean or lake, or when they get sweaty or show signs of body odor.
- When kids hit puberty, they should start taking a shower every day. It's a good idea for them to shampoo their hair every day or every other day, and to wash their faces twice a day to get rid of dirt and oil. Black children and those with dry or curly hair can continue to shampoo their hair every seven to 10 days after the age of 12.
- Kids don't usually need to use conditioners since they're designed to help dry and damaged hair. But conditioner—applied to the body and ends of hair, not the scalp—can help prevent tangles in kids with long, wavy or curly hair.

"While these guidelines work well for most children, every child is different," Sidbury said. "If your child continues to have body odor, or if

your child's hair or scalp seem too oily or dry after following these guidelines, see a board-certified dermatologist."

He also cautioned that kids with skin conditions such as eczema should follow the bathing recommendations of their dermatologist.

More information: For more tips about kids and bathing, check out the American Academy of Dermatology's "[How Often Do Children Need to Bathe?](#)" video on YouTube.

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