



Topic Expert Group: Care procedures

Nappy change

Camba F, Oude-Reimer M, Frauenfelder O, Ceccatelli M, Jørgensen E, Hanks-Drielsma I, Silva E

Target group

Infants, parents, and families

User group

Healthcare professionals, neonatal units, hospitals, and health services

Statement of standard

Nappy change is performed with a technique that minimises skin damage, discomfort, and physiologic instability.

Rationale

Nappy change is an everyday care routine and necessary for infant's comfort, to keep the perineum area clean and the skin protected. Inadequate hygiene or aggressive cleansing may trigger dermatitis in the perineal area. The procedure can be stressful, especially for extremely preterm and ill infants. (1) They are at greater risk of short-term consequences of stress (e.g. fluctuations in intracranial blood pressure with an increasing risk for intraventricular haemorrhage, increased heart rate, and decreased oxygen saturation), as well as long-term consequences of stress (e.g. allostatic load and an inability to respond appropriately to a stressor). (2) The manner in which nappy change is performed makes a difference for the infant's comfort and physiologic and behavioural stability, and should be carried out in a developmentally sensitive manner. (3–6)

Benefits

Short-term benefits

- Improved comfort (2–4)
- Improved physiological stability during the procedure (3,4)
- Reduced perineal skin damage (6)
- Protected sleep (5)
- Supported parents' role and bonding (7,8)
- Improved parental awareness of their infant's behavioural cues, and participation in the care of their infant (7,9,10)

Long-term benefits

- Reduced complications associated with prematurity (2)
- Improved parental awareness of their infant's behavioural cues, and participation in their's infant's care (consensus)



Components of the standard

Component	Grading of evidence	Indicator of meeting the standard
For parents and family		
1. Parents and family are informed by healthcare professionals about nappy change, skin care, behavioural signs of discomfort in the infant during nappy change, and how to react accordingly. (9,10) (see TEG Care procedures)	A (Moderate quality) B (High quality)	Parent feedback, Patient information sheet
2. Parents are offered the opportunity to carry out nappy change (cleaning the skin, offering postural support or holding the infant in skin-to-skin contact). (9,10)	A (Moderate quality) B (High quality)	Parent feedback
For healthcare professionals		
3. A unit guideline on nappy change is adhered to by all healthcare professionals.	B (High quality)	Guideline
4. Training on nappy change, infant behaviour during nappy change, strategies to optimise comfort, minimise disturbance, and skin care is attended by all responsible healthcare professionals.	B (High quality)	Training documentation
For neonatal unit		
5. A unit guideline on nappy change is available and regularly updated.	B (High quality)	Guideline
For hospital		
6. Training on nappy change, infant behaviour during nappy change, strategies to optimise comfort, minimise disturbance, and skin care is ensured.	B (High quality)	Training documentation
7. Disposable absorbent nappies of different sizes suitable for infants of various weights are available. (8,11)	A (Low quality)	Guideline
8. Specific skin cleaning agents and skin protection products according to different ages are available. (see TEG Care procedures)	A (Low quality) B (High quality)	Guideline
For health service		
N/A		



Where to go – further development of care

Further development	Grading of evidence
For parents and family N/A	
For healthcare professionals N/A	
For neonatal unit N/A	
For hospital N/A	
For health service N/A	

Getting started

Initial steps
For parents and family <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents and family are encouraged to actively participate in care procedures.• Parents and family are verbally informed by healthcare professionals about nappy change, skin care, behavioural signs of discomfort in the infant during nappy change, and how to react accordingly.
For healthcare professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend training on nappy change, infant behavior during nappy change, strategies to optimise comfort, minimise disturbance, and skin care.
For neonatal unit <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a unit guideline on nappy change.
For hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support healthcare professionals to participate in training on nappy change, infant behavior during nappy change, strategies to optimise comfort, minimise disturbance, and skin care.
For health service N/A

Source

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Lifecycle

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