



BATHTUB SAFETY

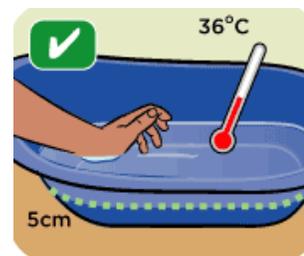
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Drowning is the major cause of death for children under the age of 5. Over 90% of hot tap water scalds occur in the bathroom because the temperature of water from the tap is set too high. Every precaution should be taken to ensure your children's safety during bath time. You can avoid these risks by following the basic rules:

- ➔ **NEVER** leave your infants and children alone in or near water. Make sure they are within arm's reach and in your sight at all times. Infants can slip under water very suddenly, and they can drown in just one (1) inch (2.5 cm) of water. **It only takes a few seconds for a child to drown.** Young children can drown silently without coughing or splashing, not giving you any signs that they are in direct danger.
- ➔ Even when you're using a bath seat or bath ring, **watch your children at all times.** A bath seat or bath ring on its own without your supervision won't keep your child safe. Please do not allow these items to give you a false sense of security. If your baby slips under the bath ring, it can trap your baby under the water and the arms that attach to the side of the bathtub can slip which will also trap your baby under the water. Visit [Consumer Products Safety, Health Canada](#) or call 1-866-662-0666 for more information.
- ➔ Never leave older children or siblings to supervise. They don't have the skills to perceive and react to an emergency situation.
- ➔ Ensure that the water temperature is between 37°C and 38°C before placing your children in the bathtub and approximately 36°C for newborns. Young children have very sensitive skin and bath water that is too hot can **scald them in just 3 seconds.**



- ➔ Purchase **anti-scald devices** for your water system. Talk to a licensed plumber for suggestions on water temperature safety for your children. A tempering

valve reduces the hot water temperature in the bathroom but doesn't change the temperature in the kitchen. The plumber might also suggest a thermostatic mixing valve, which can be set to deliver hot water at a safe temperature.

- If your bathroom has mixer taps, **run the hot and cold water together**. If you need to increase the temperature, add more warm water - not straight hot water. Running the hot water tap by itself increases the risk that your children will be scalded if they place their hands or feet in the stream.
- Point mixer taps towards the cold setting.
- Test the water temperature with your wrist and elbow before you place your children in the bathtub. It should be comfortably warm, but not hot. If your skin flushes when you put your elbow in the water, it is too hot for a child's skin. Consider purchasing a special water thermometer.
- Run only enough water for washing and play. Belly-button height or about 8 cm (3.13 inches) of water is plenty for children who can sit up on their own.
- Prepare your children's bathing needs (towels, washcloths, cotton balls, clean diaper and clean clothes) in advance so that your focus remains solely on your children.



- Distractions could take you away from the bath and cause you to lose track of time. Take the phone off the hook or activate the answering machine before running the bath. Do not have anything cooking on the stove or in the oven during bath time. If there's a knock at the door, do not answer it. Remember you have only one priority during bath time and that is the safety and well-being of your children.
- If a very important occurrence needs your absolute attention, take your children out of the bathtub, wrap them in towels, and walk with them out of the bathroom. Remember to lock the bathroom door behind you.
- Immediately release the water from the bathtub when bath time is over.
- Depending on the circumstances bath time can be stressful because it happens at the end of the day when parents have many things to accomplish before they themselves can relax or go to bed. This situation can increase the risk of injuries to your children. Consider changing your routine if this situation sounds familiar to you.
- If you don't have the time to stay beside your children during bath time give them a good wash with a warm washcloth instead.
- The damp conditions of the bathtub make it a potential breeding ground for bacteria and other germs. Clean out the tub on a regular basis to reduce the presence of germs, mildew and bacteria.

Safeguard the Bathroom

- ➔ Keep bathroom and laundry doors shut when not in use so your young children can't get to any taps or water sources on their own. Prevent your children from entering the bathroom by installing a hook-and-eye lock positioned high on the door so your small children cannot reach it.
- ➔ Install toilet and cabinet locks that are difficult for your children to figure out but easy for an adult to manoeuvre. Toilet bowls and diaper pails pose similar drowning hazards. Choose diaper pails with locking lids, and always close the toilet lid after use.
- ➔ Remove sharp utensils, objects and appliances such as razors, scissors, toothbrushes, nail clippers, nail files and blow dryers and keep them in your bedroom or locked in a cupboard well out of your children's reach.



- ➔ Cleaning products, detergent and bleach, medications, vitamins, cosmetics, electrical appliances, and mouthwash (contains alcohol) should be locked away and out of your children's reach.
- ➔ Place your personal bath and beauty products such as soaps, shampoos, conditioners, body lotions, after-shave, shaving cream, etc. out of your children's reach.
- ➔ Install childproof tub and sink knobs to prevent your children from turning on the water. Install a faucet cover that pads the faucet and prevents burns caused by your children brushing up against it when it's hot.
- ➔ Cap all electrical outlets with safety covers. Make sure outlets are protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to safeguard against electrocution.
- ➔ Always unplug small appliances, such as hair dryers and curling irons, when not in use, and place them safely out of reach of children. Some small electrical appliances can retain enough electricity to cause shock even after they have been turned off.
- ➔ Do not use space heaters or extension cords in the bathroom.
- ➔ Secure hampers or laundry shoots to prevent children from falling in or becoming trapped.
- ➔ Put safety locks on all the windows.
- ➔ Lock away the garbage can inside a cabinet or under the sink so that it is out of your children's reach.
- ➔ If you keep a cat litter box in the bathroom, choose an enclosed model with a small opening or place it behind a childproof gate.



Protect Your Children against Slips & Falls

- ➔ A wet bathtub and tile floor can be very slippery. Take precautions to avoid accidental falls and bumps by installing a non-slip bathtub mat or applying decals on the bathtub floor.
- ➔ Place a non-slip bathroom rug by the side of the tub that your children can step out onto. Teach your children to be extra careful when they are wet and getting in and out of the bathtub especially when they are not yet sure of their footing.
- ➔ Install a faucet cover over your bathtub taps as a proactive measure against painful collisions. They come in colourful, animal shapes and can be purchased at baby-supply stores and online vendors.
- ➔ Quickly wipe up water that has splashed on the floor so as not to add to the risk of slipping. Commercial padding is available that fits snugly over the top edge of the bathtub which cushions the hard surfaces and prevents serious injury should your children fall against it. As an added precaution, you can drape a thick, damp towel over the side of the bathtub during your child's bath.
- ➔ Bathtub safety devices help minimize injuries in the tub, but they do not replace constant supervision from an adult.



What to do if your Child is Burned or Scalded

- ➔ If the clothing is not sticking to your child's skin remove all clothing at once. Every second counts. Clothes hold in heat and can cause a deeper burn.
- ➔ Immediately submerge the burned area in cold water or run plenty of cold water over it for **at least 20-30 minutes** to reduce the heat in the skin. Cooling the burn is soothing and prevents the heat from 'cooking' into the skin's deeper layers.
- ➔ **Never use ice on a burn or scald.**
- ➔ Avoid placing your children in cold baths after a burn or scald as children can be dangerously chilled by the cold water.
- ➔ Take off anything tight (jewellery) because scalds and burns cause swelling.
- ➔ Cover the scald with a clean, non-fluffy cloth – a pillowcase, tea towel or sheet can reduce the danger of infection. This cover must be removed before treating the burn or scald.
- ➔ **Never use butter or oils to cover the burn.**
- ➔ Call an ambulance, or take your child to a hospital or doctor. You should get medical advice for any burns or scalds larger than a quarter.

Bathtub Toy Safety

Children love playing with toys in the bathtub, but it's up to you to ensure those toys remain clean, free from mildew and germ free.

- ➔ Do not purchase spongy, porous, or wooden toys for the bathtub, as they tend to retain moisture and can become the perfect breeding ground for bacteria.
- ➔ Squeeze toys that have holes in them to release all the water thoroughly and allow them to air dry.
- ➔ Rinse out all toys thoroughly after each bath and remove them from the humid, warm environment of the bathroom to allow them to air-dry thoroughly.



Manually Cleaning Bathtub Toys

1. Fill a bucket or similar container with one gallon of fresh water.
2. Add 1/2 cup of white vinegar, and mix the solution thoroughly.
3. Place the bath toys in the vinegar-and-water solution.
4. Let them soak for 10 minutes. (MarthaStewart.com says this gives the vinegar's acid time to eat away at any built-up dirt or soap deposits while also killing mildew.)
5. Remove the toys from the water.
6. Scrub them, if needed, with an old toothbrush to gently remove any dirt or stains that remain.
7. Rinse the toys under fresh water until no vinegar scent remains.
8. Set them aside to dry.

Using Dishwasher to Clean Bathtub Toys

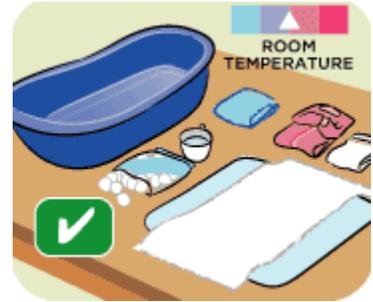
Make sure the toys are labeled safe for placement in a dishwasher. If the toys have no such labeling, clean them with the manual option above.

1. Open your dishwasher, and place the bathtub toys on the dishwasher racks.
2. Fill the dishwasher's detergent dispenser with a solution of one part vinegar and three parts hot water. Your dishwasher's manual will tell you the total capacity of the dispenser.
3. Run the dishwasher on a normal cycle.
4. Remove the toys from the dishwasher. The dishwasher's rinse cycle should have removed all traces of vinegar. If a vinegar scent persists, rinse the toys until all remnants of a vinegar scent are gone.
5. Set the toys on a towel to dry.

The methods to clean your children's bathtub toys were resourced from Martha Stewart, Homekeeping Solutions.

Sponge Baths for Infants

For first time mothers bathing an infant can cause anxiety and worry. If you're not comfortable handling an infant in a bathtub, and feel awkward getting your infant in and out of the tub, you are not alone. Your baby may not be happy about his/her first real bath and could express annoyance rather loudly, and this only adds to your anxiety.



Let me allay your fears by saying that it won't take long before bath time is one of your baby's favourite events. As soon as your baby hears the water running you'll see the excitement in his/her eyes. There is nothing more beautiful than the scent of a freshly bathed baby bundled up in a large, soft towel within your arms. You'll soon forget your anxiety and anticipate the joy and splendour of bathing your baby.

Sponge Bath Supplies

1. Baby body wash which can also be used as shampoo
2. Two washcloths
3. A towel
4. A bowl of warm water
5. Several cotton balls
6. Lotion (optional)
7. A diaper
8. An outfit to put on your baby

Baby's First Sponge Bath

Your baby will not be ready to have a bath until the umbilical cord stump falls off (about a week). If your son has had a circumcision, it usually takes about 2 week to heal. Until these durations of time have passed, give your baby a sponge bath using the following guidelines.



- Wash your baby's face before you take off any of his/her clothing. Using one cotton ball for each eye, wipe his/her eyelids from the inside corner out. Use a new damp cotton ball to clean around his/her nose.
- To wash the outside of your baby's ears, use a damp cotton swab or washcloth. Don't clean inside baby's ears using a swab because this could puncture his/her eardrum.



- To shampoo your baby's hair, cradle and support his/her spine within your forearm and hold his/her head back slightly. Sprinkle the baby's head with warm water and squeeze out a drop or two of shampoo. Lather, scrub gently, and rinse with a wet washcloth. Dry your baby's head with a towel.
- Undress your baby and lay him/her flat.
- Put a little bit of soap on a soft, warm washcloth to wash his/her body.

- When your baby is clean pat him dry with a towel, apply lotion, and get him/her dressed.

Sponge Bath Tips

- If your son was circumcised, do not attempt to pull back the foreskin. Until the circumcision wound heals, avoid using soap on the area. After the penis has healed, you can wash it as you would any other part of his body.
- Wash a girl's genitals by wiping from front to back. Don't use soap in her groin area because it may cause irritation.
- Bathe your newborn on your bed or on a table covered with many soft towels. Talk to your baby with a soothing voice or play some relaxing music in the background.
- Newborns start to shiver rather quickly when they get cold. Dry and cover with a towel the areas you just washed to keep your baby as warm as possible.

Bathing your Baby in a Mini Bathtub

When your baby's umbilical cord stump has fallen off and their circumcision has healed (if your son had the procedure), he/she is ready for a bath in a mini tub. At this young age a baby doesn't get very dirty so he/she only needs a bath a few times a week.

- Gather your supplies (same as for sponge baths above)
- Fill the tub with a couple inches of warm water. It should be slightly cooler than your ideal temperature, as baby's skin is more sensitive.



- Gently lower your baby into the tub as you support his/her head and neck with your arm.
- Clean his/her face in the same manner as a sponge bath.
- When your baby is clean, dry him/her off.
- Apply lotion if needed.

