

How often do children need to take a bath?

If getting your child to take a bath often means a struggle, you'll be glad to know that a daily bath may not be necessary. How often your child needs a bath depends on your child's age and activities.

These guidelines from dermatologists can help you figure out how often a child 6 years of age or older needs a bath. You'll also find dermatologists' tips that can help you:

- Make bath time fun a child at any age.
- Teach your child healthy hand-washing habits.

Children ages 6 to 11: Guidelines for bathing

If your child is in this age group, taking a daily bath is fine. Children in this age group, however, may not need a daily bath. Children aged 6 to 11 need a bath:

- At least once or twice a week.
- When they get dirty, such as playing in the mud.
- After being in a pool, lake, ocean, or other body of water.
- When they get sweaty or have body odor.
- As often as directed by a dermatologist if getting treated for a skin disease .

Tweens and teens: Guidelines for bathing

Thankfully, most kids want to bathe daily once they hit puberty. Dermatologists tell parents that once puberty starts, kids should:

- Shower or take a bath daily.
- Wash their face twice a day to remove oil and dirt.
- Take a bath or shower after swimming, playing sports, sweating heavily.

How to make bath time fun

By making bath time fun, children often start to enjoy it. Bath time can be fun when it becomes the time your child gets to:

- Play with a favorite (waterproof) toy.
- Listen to favorite stories.
- Read a book made especially for taking into the bathtub.
- Have fun with an adventure that you create to make bath time fun.

How to teach healthy hand-washing habits

There is no getting around the importance of frequent hand washing. Children need to wash their hands before eating. Hand washing also is essential after they use the bathroom, blow their noses, and touch pets and other animals.

You can help your child develop healthy hand-washing habits by teaching them these steps:

1. Wet hands with clean, warm water.
2. Soap up, rubbing the hands together to make a lather. The lather should go all over the hands and in between the fingers.
3. Continue rubbing for about 20 seconds. To help younger children count the time, you can ask them to sing "Happy Birthday" to you two times.
4. Rinse with warm, running water.
5. Dry hands on a clean towel.