

## **Parkland Memorial Hospital Saves Time and Money With Basinless Bathing**

### **Sage's Personal Cleansing Washcloths Streamline Newborn Baths**

The Labor and Delivery Unit at Parkland Memorial Hospital, a 900+bed facility in Dallas, Texas, delivers more than 15,000 babies a year. The department averages 45 births a day, and babies are bathed within the first 2 to 3 hours of birth, which keeps nursery staff very busy. Parkland Memorial, rated among the 25 best hospitals in the U.S., used to bathe babies using traditional soap and water and found the process to be lengthy.

Pamela Ford, RN, BSN, Unit Manager II at Parkland Memorial's Nursery Unit, began researching alternative bathing options that would help staff perform baths faster and support infection control efforts, while keeping babies safe. In fall 2000, Ford learned of Sage Products' Junior Comfort Bath washcloths.

Junior Comfort Bath disposable washcloths are premoistened, rinse-free and require no water. The cloths contain aloe and vitamin E moisturizers, do not require moving a baby near a sink or basin and leave skin soft and clean. Ford immediately realized the potential time savings from using the washcloths and decided to trial the cloths in the hospital's Level 1 & Level 2 newborn nurseries and the admissions nursery.

"Initially, staff was concerned that the washcloths would not adequately clean babies. because they thought nothing would clean as well as soap and running water," said Ford. "However, the washcloths sold themselves. Staff quickly recognized that the washcloths were just as effective and that they saved time."

Ford and her staff saw that in the same amount of time it took to bathe two babies using soap and water, they could bathe six babies in their cribs, underneath the warmer, using Junior Comfort Bath washcloths. "We were bathing babies three times faster," Ford said.

Junior Comfort Bath also provided additional benefits. The washcloths allowed staff to reunite baby and mother faster so they could begin the bonding process, which is critical to a newborn's development. Staff was able to bathe newborns under a warmer, so they could maintain consistent body temperature and lower the risk of stress due to cold. In a newborn, low body temperature can lead to complications that can greatly affect the time infants spend in the hospital. Finally, bathing babies in their cribs eliminates the risk of germ exposure from sinks.

Ford shared the great results with the director of nursery services who was "very confident" with the washcloths because the adult units had experienced positive outcomes with Comfort Bath, Sage's adult washcloths.

Parkland Memorial's policy requires that a new product be evaluated by the value analysis committee and trialed against a similar product. Ford and the nursery staff compared Junior Bath with another basinless bathing product, but preferred Sage's Junior Comfort Bath.

"We liked how soft and supple Junior Comfort Bath left babies' skin and the pleasant fragrance," said Ford. "Sage's cloths provide enough cleansing solution to effectively clean the baby with just one package."

In spring 2005, the washcloths were officially introduced to all nursery areas. Within 30 days, nursing staff was trained to bathe babies with the cloths. The washcloths are contained in an insulated package that can be warmed in a microwave oven, which provides a more soothing experience for babies.

Staff and hospital leadership have been very satisfied with the cloths. Junior Comfort Bath has successfully replaced traditional sink bathing and the hospital's nursery bathing protocol includes the washcloths.

Overall, Ford believes switching to Junior Bath has been a positive change for her hospital. The change has proven to be a "tremendous" time-saver, allowing more babies to be bathed in a timely manner. It is safer for babies because it eliminates the risk of exposure to sink contaminants and it helps stabilize babies' temperatures by allowing staff to bathe the baby underneath the warmer.

"These are great benefits," adds Ford. "However, we definitely know we're also saving money because we're bathing more babies in less time and we're getting babies to their mothers faster. It is definitely worth it."

Families have also expressed satisfaction with Junior Comfort Bath. Parents like that their baby "smells so good" and "feels soft." Parents of "boarder babies," infants who require an extended hospital stay, comment during visits how much they appreciate that the baby is being kept clean and smells so good.

For hospitals contemplating alternative bathing methods, Ford suggests keeping an open mind. "You will be surprised at the benefits."