

be used to prevent damage caused by chemical factors. In addition, foam dressings that wick moisture away from the skin are helpful around gastrostomy tubes and tracheostomy sites.

## Bathing

Most infants and children can be bathed at the bedside or in a standard bathtub or shower. For infants and young children confined to bed, use commercially available bath cloths or the towel method. Immerse two towels in a dilute soap solution and wring them damp. With the child lying supine on a dry towel, place one damp towel on top of the child and use it to gently clean the body. Discard the towel and dry the child and turn him or her prone. Repeat the procedure using the second damp towel. If bar soap is used, discard the basin and bar soap after a single bath ([Marchaim, Taylor, Hayakawa, et al, 2012](#)), because they can serve as a reservoir for pathogens in the hospital setting. Chlorhexidine is much less likely to harbor microbes ([Powers, Peed, Burns, et al, 2012](#); [Rupp, Huerta, Yu, et al, 2013](#)), but it is generally not approved for use in infants younger than 2 months corrected gestational age.

Infants and small children are never left unattended in a bathtub, and infants who are unable to sit alone are securely held with one hand during the bath. The nurse securely supports the infant's head with one hand or grasps the infant's farther arm while the head rests comfortably on the nurse's arm. Children who are able to sit without assistance need only close supervision and a pad placed in the bottom of the tub to prevent slipping and loss of balance.

School-age children and adolescents may shower or bathe. Nurses need to use judgment regarding the amount of supervision the child requires. Some can assume this responsibility unaided, but others need someone in constant attendance. Children with cognitive impairments, physical limitations such as severe anemia or leg deformities, or suicidal or psychotic problems (who may commit bodily harm) require close supervision.

Areas that require special attention are the ears, between skinfolds, the neck, the back, and the genital area. The genital area should be carefully cleansed and dried, with particular care given to skinfolds. In uncircumcised boys, usually those older than 3 years of age, the foreskin should be gently retracted, the exposed