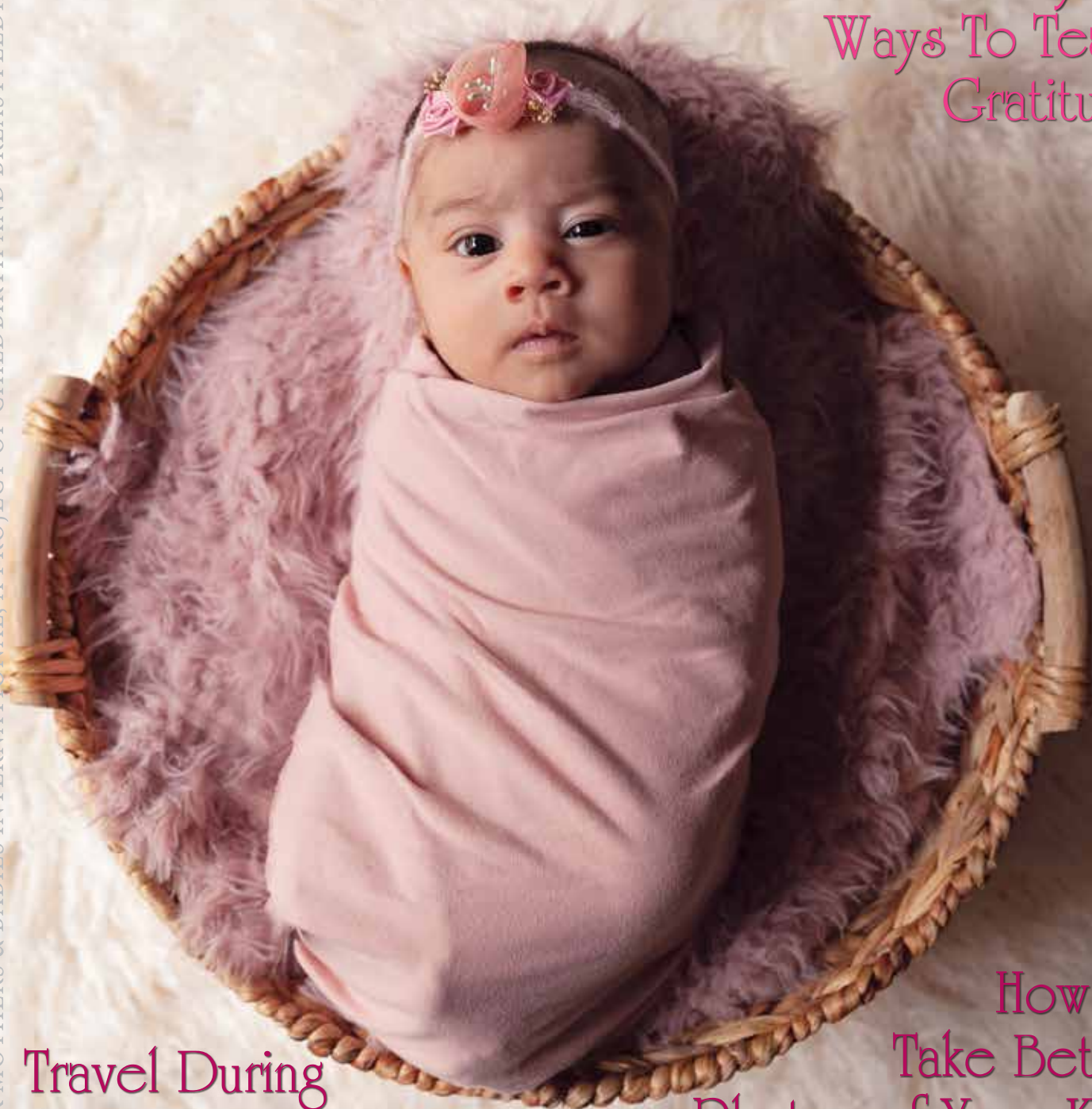


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# Bathing a Newborn: Birthing Suit to Bath Tub

A seasoned dad and swimming coach takes a trip down memory lane to the first time he bathed his baby. The gradual approach he used will put nervous new parents at ease and make bathtime special.

By Gordon Ellard

As a father of two, I admit that I had mixed emotions about bringing my first child home. I was so excited but on the other hand, I was a little terrified. The “What to Expect” books seemed to make a lot of sense, but would it all fall into place when finally home?

Bath time for me ended up being one of my favourite activities of the day. A potential slippery business soon turned into a whole new world of uninterrupted fun.

In the first week, we used a small cloth bath support seat that we put directly into the bathtub and used sponges to gently wash our newborn. This was an ideal start as our baby boy was supported and comfortable. We then gradually filled the bathtub (water temperature should be about 32°C) so that the water level covered most of his body. This helped him have the sensation of floating and yet feel supported in the water.

It still amazes me how much a baby of fewer than two weeks old loved the water. I guess in hindsight it’s no surprise that babies love the sensation of being in the water as they have spent the previous nine months suspended in fluid.

As our baby grew, so did the activities we did with him in the bathtub. I would fill up the tub to about 30cm and then I would get into the bath. My wife, Elizabeth, would then hand our son to me and after a few moments of cuddles and singing nursery rhymes, I would slowly lower him into the water on his back – it was such a lovely, relaxed and calm environment.

With one hand supporting his neck and the other the small of his back, I would gradually rock him back and forth on his



back, progressively supporting him less, until he was super relaxed with his ears and feet under the water.

I would slowly remove my second hand from his back and he would then float with just one hand supporting his head. Once complete and with the baby still happy, I would sit him up while cradling him, and it was shower time!

I had bought a little dolphin rain shower and I would pour water slowly from the back of his head then over his whole face, nice and gently. As he grew more accustomed to the water over the coming weeks and months, I would support

him less and made bigger showers – he just loved it, splashing and kicking all over the place.

The amount of splashing and fun would often mean that the entire bathroom would need a good mop!

I did the same routine for my daughter, who unsurprisingly found the whole “swimming” experience thoroughly enjoyable too.

## About the Author

### Gordon Ellard

Gordon is the founder of Bangkok Dolphins which was established in 1997. Gordon has a passion for all things swimming and has worked to establish a programme at Dolphins that is accredited by the Thai Ministry of Education. His favourite age to teach is babies and the learn-to-swim range. Gordon is married and has two teenage children, who he taught to swim.

