

DEFINITION

Any rash in the skin area covered by a diaper

Causes

Almost every child gets diaper rashes. Most are due to prolonged contact with moisture, bacteria, and ammonia. The skin irritates are made by the action of bacteria from bowel movement on certain chemicals in the urine. Bouts of diarrhea cause rashes in most children. Diaper rashes occur equally with cloth and disposable diapers.

Expected Course

With proper treatment these rashes are usually deter in 3 days. If they do not respond, a yeast infection (*Candida*) has probably occurred. Suspect this if the rash becomes bright red and raw, covers a large area, and is surrounded by red dots. You will need a special cream for yeast infection.

HOME CARE

Change Diapers Frequently. The key to successful treatment is keeping the area dry and clean so that it can heal itself. Check the diapers about every hour, and if they are wet or soiled, change them immediately. Exposure to stools causes most of the skin damage. Make sure that your baby's bottom is completely dry before closing up the fresh diaper.

Increase Air Exposure. Leave your baby's bottom exposed to the air as much as possible each day. Practical times are during naps or after bowel movements. Put a towel under your baby. When the diaper is on, fasten it loosely so that air can circulate between it and the skin. Avoid airtight plastic pants for a few days. If you use disposable

diapers, punch holes in them to let the air in. •
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Rinse the Skin with Warm Water. •
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Washing the skin with soap after every diaper change will damage the skin. Use a mild soap (such as Dove) only after bowel movement. The soap will •
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remove the film of bacteria left on the skin. After •
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using soap, rinse well. If the diaper rash is quite raw, use warm water soaks for 15 minutes three times every day.

Nighttime Care. At night use the new disposable diapers that are made with materials that lock wetness inside the diaper and away from the skin. Avoid plastic pants and night. Until the rash is better, awaken once during the night to change your baby's diaper.

Creams and Ointments. Most babies don't need any diaper creams or powders. If your baby's skin is dry and cracked, however, apply an ointment to protect the skin after washing off each bowel movement. A barrier ointment is also needed whenever your child has diarrhea.

Your baby's ointment is _____.

Cornstarch reduces friction and can be used to prevent future diaper rashes after this one is healed. Studies show that cornstarch does not encourage yeast infections. Avoid talcum powder because of the risk of pneumonia if your baby inhales it.

Yeast Infections. If the rash is bright red or does not respond to 3 days of warm water cleansing and air exposure, suspect a yeast infection. Apply Lotrimin cream (no prescription needed) 4 times per day or after each bottom rinse for bowel movement.

Prevention of Diaper Rash. Changing the diaper immediately after your child has a bowel movement and rinsing the skin with warm water are the most effective things you can do to prevent diaper rash.

If you use cloth diapers and wash them yourself you will need to use bleach (such as Clorox, Borax, or Purex) to sterilize them. During the regular cycle, use any detergent. Then refill the washer with warm water, add 1 cup of bleach, and run a second cycle, unlike bleach, vinegar is not effective in killing germs.

CALL OUR OFFICE

IMMEDIATELY if

- It looks infected (yellow pus, pimples, blisters, spreading redness, red streaks).
- Your child starts acting very sick.

During regular hours if

- The rash isn't much better in 3 days.
- You have other concerns or questions.

Serous complications from diaper rash are rare. Call your infant's pediatrician if the diaper rash develops any large blisters or open sores. Also call if your infant is running a fever, acting sick, or if your infant's face is bright red and tender to the touch,

Umbilical Cord Care

Try to keep the umbilical cord dry at all times. Apply rubbing alcohol to the base of the cord each time you change the diaper, anytime it gets wet, and keep on applying until one week after the cord falls off. If your infant cries or flinches during the application of alcohol, it is because the alcohol is cold and not because your baby is in pain. Exposing the cord to air will also help keep it dry. Keep the diaper folded below the cord to decrease irritation. If you notice any redness or warmth around the umbilical cord, please contact our office.

Hair Care

Shampoo your baby's hair once or twice a week with a special baby shampoo that doesn't sting the eyes. Don't worry about hurting the soft spot: it is well protected.

Circumcision Care

Apply a layer of Vaseline to the end of the penis every time the diaper area is changed. This will protect the penis from moisture and keep it from sticking to the diaper. If a plastic apparatus (Plastibell) has been used for the circumcision, do not remove it. Let it fall off on its own, if your infant is not circumcised, clean the penis as you would any other part of the body. It is not necessary to retract the foreskin.

Fingernail and toenail Care

Toenails should be cut straight across to prevent ingrown toenail. Round off the edges of the fingernails to avoid scratching. The best time to trim nails is after a bath when they are softer. Use a nail clipper or special baby scissors. Don't bite or peel them off.

Sunburn Prevention

An infant's skin is thinner and more sensitive to the burning effects of the sun. Avoid direct exposure to the sun's rays. Cover your infant's face and extremities (floppy hats are wonderful!). Use sunscreen that is rated 15 or higher on any exposed areas. Don't apply sunscreen containing PABA on infants less than 6 months old. There are commercially available infant sunscreens on the market today.