

Diaper Rash

Tips on prevention and treatment

What does diaper rash look like?

Diaper rash usually causes mild redness and scaling where the diaper touches your baby's skin. In bad cases, the rash can cause pimples, blisters and other sores.

If your baby's rash gets infected, the rash may be bright red and the skin may be swollen. Small red patches or spots may spread beyond the main part of the rash, even outside the diaper area.

What causes diaper rash?

Most diaper rashes are caused by skin irritation. Irritation can be caused by diapers that rub against the skin, fit too tightly or are left on for too long. Your baby's skin can also be irritated by the soap used to wash cloth diapers, or by some brands of disposable diapers or baby wipes.

Plastic pants that fit over diapers raise the temperature and moisture in the diaper area. Heat, moisture and irritated skin make it easier for diaper rash to start and for germs to grow. When a rash gets infected, it's often a yeast infection, also called *Candida*. Bacteria can also infect the skin. Infection can make diaper rash much worse.

How is diaper rash prevented and treated?

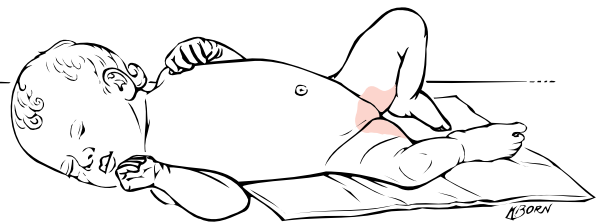
The key to preventing and treating diaper rash is to keep your baby's diaper area clean, cool and dry.

Change your baby's diaper often, and let him or her go without a diaper when possible. This lets the air dry his or her skin.

You might try placing your baby on an open cloth diaper during nap time. Check the diaper shortly after your baby falls asleep and replace it if it's wet. Babies often urinate right after falling asleep.

See the box on page 2 for other tips on preventing and treating diaper rash. If these things don't work, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may suggest using 0.5% or 1% hydrocortisone cream for a very short while.

Don't use creams that contain boric acid, camphor, phenol, methyl salicylate or compound of benzoin tincture. These things can be harmful.



Tips on preventing and treating diaper rash

- Check your baby's diaper every hour and change it often—as soon as it's wet or soiled.
- Carefully clean your baby's bottom between diaper changes. Use plain warm (not hot) water with or without a very mild soap.
- Allow your baby's skin to dry completely before putting on another diaper.
- Use zinc oxide ointment (Balmex Ointment, Caldesene Medicated Ointment, Desitin Ointment) or petrolatum (A and D Ointment, Vaseline) to protect your baby's skin from moisture.
- Avoid using plastic pants.
- Change the type of wipes, diapers or soap you're using.
- If you use cloth diapers, try boiling them for 15 minutes after you wash them to get all of the soap and germs out.

What if my baby has an infection?

If your baby also has an infection with the rash, the rash may not get better by following these tips alone. Your doctor might give you a prescription for a special cream to rub on your baby's rash.

Are creams with vitamin A better?

No. Creams that contain vitamin A don't seem to work any better than other types of creams.

What about powder?

Talcum powder and cornstarch aren't recommended. Talcum powder can get in your baby's lungs. Cornstarch may make a yeast infection worse.

Does my baby need special diapers?

Cloth diapers washed by a diaper service are less likely to cause diaper rash than those washed at home. This may be because diaper services use hotter water, which kills all germs and removes chemicals that can irritate your baby's skin. Boiling diapers for 15 minutes on the stove after washing them is one way to do this yourself.

Some disposable diapers have an extra-absorbent gelling material that seems to help keep the skin dry. Using this type of diaper may help prevent diaper rash in some babies.

But remember that the most important thing about diapers is to change them often.



Call your doctor if

- The diaper rash occurs in the first six weeks of life
- Pimples and small ulcers form
- Your baby has a fever
- Your baby loses weight or isn't eating as well as usual
- Large bumps or nodules appear
- The rash spreads to other areas, such as the arms, face or scalp
- The rash doesn't get better after trying the tips on treating diaper rash for one week

This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.



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