

Let's Talk ABOUT...

Most babies have a diaper rash some time during their “diaper wearing” days.

How do I recognize a diaper rash?

At first, the skin under the diaper may be slightly red. Sometimes only the skin folds are red. A diaper rash may be pink to dark red and even have broken, bleeding sores.

What causes diaper rash?

Infants have diaper rash because of prolonged and repeated contact of the skin with urine and stool. When urine and stool mix, they produce ammonia. Ammonia is irritating to the skin and increases the chance the skin will break down.

There are other things that increase the chances that a child will develop a diaper rash:

- Diarrhea
- Prolonged use of antibiotics
- A warm, humid environment

How do I prevent my child from getting a diaper rash?

- Keep your child's diaper area clean and dry by changing the diaper every 1 to 3 hours, or whenever her diaper is wet or soiled.
- When you change your child's diaper, wash the area with clear water. If your child has had a bowel movement, use a mild soap (one that does not have perfumes or other additives) and water; rinse then pat dry; and always clean in the folds. Wash girls from the front to back. This prevents bladder infections. If your boy is not circumcised, gently retract his foreskin, clean the skin and then gently replace the foreskin.
- You can apply a thin layer of protective ointment to the diaper area, for example A & D ointment®, Desitin®, Ilex®, 1-2-3 cream, Carrington Moisture Barrier®, Calmoseptine®, or even Bag Balm®. This

Diaper rash

will protect the skin from ammonia irritation. Be sure to apply the ointment only to thoroughly cleaned skin.

- If you use cloth diapers, wash the diapers this way:
 - Soak soiled diapers in commercial soap or solution of Borax ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup Borax to 1 gallon of water) while they are waiting to be washed.
 - Wash the diapers with a mild detergent such as Dreft or Ivory Snow. Avoid harsh detergents, presoaks, bleaches, and fabric softeners as they might leave residues that irritate your child's skin. It is important to rinse the diapers completely 2 to 3 times.
 - Add $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup of vinegar to the last rinse. This will get rid of any ammonia in the diapers.
- Remove your child's diaper for periods during the day to expose their diaper area to air.

What can I do to treat my child's diaper rash?

- Leave your child's diaper off during naptime. Turn your baby on her stomach and leave her bottom exposed to the air.
- Follow the same instructions listed above that you would use to prevent diaper rash.
- It is not necessary to scrub off the ointments used. Make sure to remove the urine and stool and then add more ointment. The ointment is a good cover coat and acts as a protective barrier. It is also helpful to vary the ointment you use. Some rashes respond to simple home remedies, such as, applying Maalox liquid to the skin as a barrier followed by a coat of protective ointment.
- Contact your pediatrician or the clinic nurse if:
 - Your child's diaper rash does not improve after 2 to 3 days

- Your child's rash looks infected
- Your child's urine has a foul odor
- Your child's urine is dark in color
- Your child's urine contains blood