

Let's Talk About...

Diaper Rash

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 become 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.

Other things that increase a child's risk for developing a diaper rash:

- Diarrhea
- Prolonged use of antibiotics
- A warm, humid environment
- Chemical sensitivity
- Chafing
- Certain foods

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 1–3 hours, or whenever the diaper is wet or soiled.
- When you change your child's diaper, wash the area with clear water. If your child has a bowel movement, use baby wipes free of alcohol or fragrances, and then pat dry. Always clean in the folds. Wash girls from the front to back. This prevents bladder infections. If your boy is not circumcised, gently pull back his foreskin, clean the skin and gently replace the foreskin.

- You can apply a thin layer of protective ointment like Baza Cleanse and Protect, A & D ointment®, Desitin®, iLEX®, Mustela 1-2-3 cream, Carrington Moisture Barrier cream®, Calmoseptine®, or even Bag Balm® to the diaper area. This will protect the skin from ammonia irritation. 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 a Borax solution (half-cup Borax to one gallon of water).
 - Wash the diapers with a mild detergent such as Dreft or Ivory Snow. Avoid harsh detergents, presoaks, bleaches and fabric softeners. These may leave residues that irritate your child's skin. Rinse the diapers completely two to three times.
 - Add a half-cup to a 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 the 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 onto their stomach and leave their bottom exposed to the air.
- Follow the same instructions listed above that you would use to prevent diaper rash.
- You don't need to scrub off the ointments used. Remove the urine and stool (poop), and then add more ointment. The ointment is a good cover coat and acts as a protective barrier. It can be helpful to vary the ointment you use. Some rashes respond to simple home remedies. Try applying Maalox liquid to the skin as a barrier and adding a coat of protective ointment.

- Contact your pediatrician or the clinic nurse if:
 - Your child’s diaper rash does not improve after 2–3 days
 - Your child’s rash looks infected
 - Your child’s urine smells bad
 - Your child’s urine is dark in color
 - Your child’s urine contains blood

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