

## Diaper Rash

Diaper rash is a very common condition that can cause a baby's skin to become sore, red and tender.

### Causes

The rash can occur due to one of the following:

- irritation from soiled diapers left on for too long
- friction from the diaper
- certain brands of detergent, soaps or baby wipes may have ingredients that cause your baby's skin to react
- lack of air circulation due to the plastic, leak-proof liner in diapers
- new foods
- diarrhea

Diaper rash that lasts for more than a few days, even with changes to the diapering routine, might be caused by a type of fungus known as yeast. This form of the rash is usually red, slightly raised and has small red dots extending beyond the main part of the rash. It often starts in the creases of skin and can spread to skin on the front and back of the baby. Antibiotics given to a baby or a breastfeeding mom can lead to a yeast infection by killing off the "good" bacteria that keep the yeast from growing.

### Prevention

- Change your baby's soiled or wet diapers as soon as possible and clean the area thoroughly.
- Occasionally soak your baby's bottom between diaper changes with warm water by running tap water over it or by squirting with a water bottle.
- Allow your baby's skin to dry completely before putting on another diaper.

- Pat the skin gently with a soft cloth when drying it — rubbing can lead to irritation.
- Put the diaper on loosely to prevent chafing.
- If using cloth diapers, rinse them several times after washing to remove any traces of soap or detergent.
- Avoid using fabric softeners and dryer sheets.

Some experts suggest allowing your baby to go without diapers for several hours each day to give irritated skin a chance to dry and "breathe." This is easiest if you place your baby in a crib with waterproof sheets or on a large towel on the floor.

Some babies with sensitive skin may benefit from the application of a preventative barrier cream or ointment with each diaper change. Babies with sensitivity to baby wipes can be cleansed with a cotton round moistened with water.

### Treatment

Diaper rash usually can be cleared up by checking your baby's diaper often and changing it as soon as it's wet or soiled. Creams and ointments that contain zinc oxide or petroleum help to soothe skin and protect it from moisture, and should be smeared on thickly at each diaper change. Diaper rash usually goes away within two to three days with home care, although it can last longer.

### When to call the doctor

If the rash persists, increases or if sores appear on your baby's skin, talk to your doctor. You should also seek medical care if the rash is associated with fever, there is pus draining from the rash or your child is irritable.

Depending on what type of rash your baby has, the doctor may choose to use an antifungal cream, an antibiotic cream, or a mild steroid cream for a few days until the rash disappears.