

# DIAPER RASH



## BASIC INFORMATION

Skin irritation in infants. It involves the skin in the area covered by diapers. This includes the genitals, rectum, upper thighs, and lower stomach. Diaper rash is very common.

## FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Moist, painful, red, spotty, and sometimes itchy skin in the diaper area. The skin may be cracked and split.
- In male infants a red, raw, and sometimes bloody area may appear around the opening at the tip of the penis.

## CAUSES

- It is most often a form of contact dermatitis. Diaper rash results from the skin being irritated by moisture in the urine or stool.
- Less often, it may be an allergic reaction. This can be from disposable diapers or baby wipes, or soap used for washing cloth diapers.

## RISK INCREASES WITH

- Not changing diapers often enough.
- Skin gets rubbed from rough diapers.
- Cloth diapers may not be washed properly.
- Family history of skin allergies.
- Hot, humid weather.

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Change diapers often.
- Use diaper products that are breathable. These allow more air to circulate. Breathable disposable diapers, cloth diapers, and diaper covers are available.
- Avoid using plastic pants.
- Leave diaper off for 10-30 minutes between diaper changes for air exposure.

Diaper rash may begin as intensely red patches beneath the diaper



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Curable with treatment. The rash is rarely serious. Recurrence is common.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Skin infection in the rash area.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT GENERAL MEASURES

- Home care is all that is usually needed. See your child's health care provider if you are concerned about the rash.
- Expose the affected skin area to air as when possible.
- Change diapers often, even at night, if the rash is more severe.
- Clean the skin under the diaper with warm water and mild soap that is not perfumed. Baby wipes may also be used, but they might irritate skin in some babies.
- Don't use talcum powder or cornstarch.
- Apply small amounts of petroleum jelly, lanolin ointment, or zinc oxide ointment to the rash at the first sign of diaper rash and thereafter two or three times a day.
- After you launder cloth diapers, put them in boiling water for 15 minutes. This will remove any leftover soap and kill any germs.

# DIAPER RASH

## MEDICATIONS

Your child's doctor may recommend medicated ointments or creams to be applied to the skin to help clear up the rash.

## ACTIVITY

No limits.

## DIET

No special diet. Avoid baby foods that cause diarrhea.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- Home treatment doesn't cure the rash in 1 week.
- The following occur during treatment:
  - Fever.
  - Sores develop in the rash area.
- You have any other questions or concerns, call Canadian Medical Care (+420) 235 360 133, CMC in The Park (+420) 272 913 593, or after hours (+420) 724 300 303.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- [www.kidshealth.org/parent/newborn/basics/diaper\\_rash.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/newborn/basics/diaper_rash.html)
- [www.keepkidshealthy.com](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com) (go to section diaper rash)

## SOURCE

- Moore, Stephen. Griffith's Instructions for Patients, 7th Edition. Elsevier: 2005.

Updated and reviewed by: E. Jona, March 2006