

DIAPER RASH

What is a diaper rash?

A diaper rash is any rash on the skin area covered by a diaper. Almost every child gets diaper rashes. Most of them are due to prolonged contact with moisture, bacteria, and ammonia. The ammonia and other skin irritants are made by the bacteria from bowel movements to certain chemicals in the urine. Bouts of diarrhea cause rashes in most children. Diaper rashes occur equally with cloth diapers and disposable diapers.

How long will it last?

With proper treatment these rashes are usually better in 3 days. If the rash does not improve with treatment, then your child probably has a yeast infection (Candida). If your child has a yeast infection, then the rash becomes bright red and raw, covers a large area, and is surrounded by red dots. You will need a special cream for yeast infections.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Change diapers frequently**

The key to successful treatment is keeping the area dry and clean so it can heal itself. Check the diapers about every hour, and if they are wet or soiled, change them immediately. Exposure to stools causes most of the skin damage. Make sure that your baby's bottom is completely dry before closing up the fresh diaper.

- **Increase air exposure**

Leave your baby's bottom exposed to the air as much as possible each day. Practical times are during naps or after bowel movements. Put a towel or diaper under your baby. When the diaper is on, fasten it loosely so that air can circulate between it and the skin. Avoid airtight plastic pants for a few days. If you use disposable diapers, punch holes in them to let air in.

- **Rinse the skin with warm water**

Washing the skin with soap after every diaper change will damage the skin. Use a mild soap (like Dove) only after bowel movements. The soap will remove the film of bacteria left on the skin. After using a soap, rinse well. If the diaper rash is quite raw, use warm water soaks for 15 minutes three times a day.

- **Nighttime care**

At night use the new disposable diapers that are made with materials that lock wetness inside the diaper and away from the skin. Avoid plastic pants at night. Until the rash is better, awaken your baby once during the night to change the diaper.

- **Creams and ointments**

One remedy which works well for yeast, bacteria, and irritation is a mixture you can make yourself with over-the-counter medications. Take Lotrimin (or Nystatin) and mix with equal parts Neosporin (or Bactroban). Apply the mixture of Lotrimin and Neosporin to the diaper rash with each diaper change and then cover with Vaseline to serve as a barrier. If this does not heal the diaper rash within 3-4 days, let your doctor evaluate the rash.

Cornstarch or powder reduces friction, promotes dryness, and can be used to prevent future diaper rashes after this one is healed. Recent studies showed that cornstarch does not encourage yeast infections.

- **Yeast infections**

If the rash is bright red or does not start getting better after 3 days of warm water cleaning and air exposure, your child probably has a yeast infection. Apply Lotrimin cream (no prescription necessary) four times a day or after each bottom rinse for BMs.

How can I prevent diaper rash?

Changing the diaper immediately after your child has a bowel movement and rinsing the skin with warm water are most effective things you can do to prevent diaper rash.

If you use cloth diapers and wash them yourself, you will need to use bleach (such as Clorox, Borax, or Purex) to sterilize them. During the regular cycle, use any detergent. Then refill the washer with warm water, add 1 cup of bleach, and run a second cycle. Unlike bleach, vinegar is not effective in killing germs.

When should I call my child's health care provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The rash looks infected (pimples, blisters, boils, sores)
- Your child starts acting very sick

Call during office hours if:

- The rash isn't much better in 3 days
- The diaper rash becomes bright red or raw
- You have other concerns or questions

Things to consider:

Heavy duty protection from diaper rash

- Mix together ½ tube each of A&D ointment and zinc oxide
- Add 1 tablespoon each of bacitracin ointment and Maalox or Mylanta liquid
- Add 1 tablespoon of betadine (optional)

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Date: April 1, 2022

Patient Name: _____ **DOB:** MM / DD / YY

Extra protection from diaper rash for frequent stools

- Aquaphor ointment compounded with Questran at 90:10 ratio by weight

****To be used as a prescription for compounding****

John P. Simmons, M.D.