

Fact Sheet

Nappy rash



It is common for babies to develop some redness in the nappy area, especially in older babies who sleep through the night without a nappy change. The newer disposable nappies now make nappy rash less common. If it occurs it can be treated effectively but it is better to try to prevent the rash developing.

What causes nappy rash?

Over hydration of the skin

- Prolonged exposure of the skin to wetness is the main cause of nappy rash. The longer the nappy is wet or soiled, the higher the risk of developing a rash.
- Prolonged exposure of skin to moisture, results in the break down of the skin's protective outer barrier
- Urine and faeces contain irritating substances that can penetrate broken skin and cause irritation & inflammation
- Too much soap or synthetic cleaning agent, as is used in commercial 'bubble bath' products, dry out the skin and leave it vulnerable to cracks in the skin - which can then become a passage for infection

When washing or laundering soiled cloth nappies- consider the cleaning agents you use, some products or ingredients can leave a residue in the nappy which can irritate & inflame the skin.

- Rinse nappies well.

YEAST INFECTION

Inflamed skin can quickly become infected with Candida, a fungal infection; this gives rise to small pustules around

the edge of the inflamed area & requires a special cream to clear it.

Prevention

- Change nappies as soon as possible after they become wet or soiled
- Cleanse your baby with good quality baby wipes or warm water and a cloth.
- Allow your baby to enjoy some 'nappy free' time daily, though not in the direct sun (due to the risk of radiation burn injury).
- Avoid using plastic pants.
- Wash and rinse all cloth nappies thoroughly.

If a rash develops

See your doctor if a rash develops and persists for more than a few days. It may need to be treated with a special cream.

Difficult to treat nappy rash

If you have concerns about the rash or it is not responding to your cares at home- speak with your doctor- there may be another skin condition affecting your baby.

Remember

- Change your baby's soiled nappy as soon as possible.
- Give your baby some 'nappy free' time each day
- Rinse cloth nappies well.
- Speak with your doctor if the rash continues or changes in appearance.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

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