

# **DIAPER RASH**

## **Tips on Prevention and Treatment**

### **What does diaper rash look like?**

Diaper rash usually causes mild redness and scaling where the diaper touches your baby's skin. In bad cases, the rash can cause pimples, blisters and other sores. If your baby's rash gets infected, the rash may be bright red and the skin may be swollen. Small red patches or spots may spread beyond the main part of the rash, even outside the diaper area.

### **What causes diaper rash?**

Most diaper rashes are caused by skin irritation. Diapers that rub against the skin, fit too tightly or are left on for too long can cause irritation. Your baby's skin can also be irritated by the soap used to wash cloth diapers, or by some brands of disposable diapers or baby wipes. Plastic pants that fit over diapers raise the temperature and moisture in the diaper area. Heat, moisture and irritated skin make it easier for diaper rash to start and for germs to grow.

### **How is diaper rash prevented and treated?**

The key to preventing and treating diaper rash is to keep your baby's diaper area clean, cool and dry. Change your baby's diaper often, and let him or her go without a diaper when possible to let the air dry his or her skin. Try placing your baby on an open cloth diaper during nap time. Check the diaper shortly after your baby falls asleep and replace it if it's wet. Babies often urinate right after falling asleep

### **Tips on Preventing and Treating Diaper Rash**

- Check your baby's diaper often and change it as soon as it's wet or soiled.
- Carefully clean your baby's bottom between diaper changes. Use plain warm (not hot) water with or without a very mild soap.
- Allow your baby's skin to dry completely before putting on another diaper.
- Use products that contain zinc oxide ointment (such as Desitin Ointment) or petrolatum (such as Vaseline) to protect your baby's skin from moisture.
- Avoid using plastic pants.
- If diaper rash persists, change the type of wipes, diapers or soap you're using.
- Don't use creams that contain boric acid, camphor, phenol, methyl salicylate or compound of benzoin tincture. These things can be harmful.

## **What if my baby has an infection?**

If your baby also has an infection with the rash, the rash may not get better by following these tips alone. Your doctor might give you a prescription for a special cream to use on your baby's rash.

## **What about powder?**

Talcum powder and cornstarch aren't recommended. Talcum powder can get in your baby's lungs. Cornstarch may make a yeast infection worse.

## **Should I use cloth or disposable diapers?**

The choice is up to you. Some research suggests that because disposable diapers are more absorbent they keep babies drier. If you use cloth diapers and wash them at home, boil them for 15 minutes on the stove after washing them to kill germs and remove soap that could irritate your baby's skin. But remember that the most important thing about diapers is to change them often.

## **When should I call my Healthcare Provider?**

- The diaper rash occurs in the first 6 weeks of life
- Pimples and small ulcers form
- Your baby has a fever
- Your baby loses weight or isn't eating as well as usual
- Large bumps or nodules appear
- The rash spreads to other areas, such as the arms, face or scalp
- The rash doesn't get better after trying the tips on treating diaper rash for 1 week

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The information provided in this handout is a free service to the patients of Family Medicine Associates. Please consult with your Primary Care Physician for further explanation and questions.