

 Leaflet: Nappy Rash

Nappy Rash

Most babies will develop a nappy rash at some stage. Usually it is minor and does not bother the baby. Sometimes it can look red, inflamed and angry.

What causes nappy rash?

- ◆ *Common nappy rash* . This is very common. It is due to a reaction of the skin to urine and motions. Some babies seem to be more prone to this than others.
- ◆ *Thrush*. Sometimes if the skin is inflamed it quickly becomes worse over a day or so. Darker red spots may spread around the nappy area. This is often due to thrush. Thrush is an infection with a yeast germ. It is not usually serious and is easily treated.
- ◆ *Skin conditions* . Conditions such as eczema and psoriasis can occasionally affect the nappy area. Very rare skin conditions sometimes give unusual nappy rashes.

What can I do to help?

- ◆ *Fresh air*. Leave the nappy off as much as possible. Fresh air is the best cure for nappy rash. Obviously it cannot be left off all the time but the more fresh air the better.
- ◆ *Nappy changes*. Changing the nappy more often will help. This prevents urine and motions being in contact with the skin for long periods. If washable nappies are used, wash with a small amount of detergent. Rinse thoroughly and do not use fabric softeners.
- ◆ *Washing*. Wash the baby's bottom with water only. Many soaps may actually irritate the skin, so water alone is best.
- ◆ *Drying*. After washing, make sure the bottom is properly dry before putting on a new nappy. Dry by patting, not rubbing, with a towel.
- ◆ *Powders* such as talcum powder may be irritating to the skin so are best avoided.
- ◆ *Barrier creams and ointments*. Some people think barrier creams or ointments protect the skin. Other people think they stop air from getting to the skin and should be avoided. There is no right or wrong with these. They may be of most use when the skin is beginning to heal after a treatment cream has been used.
- ◆ *Plastic pants*. Don't use tight fitting rubber pants over nappies. They keep in moisture and may make things worse.

Treatments

Creams . A doctor or health visitor may advise a cream if the above measures do not help. Apply the cream sparingly after each nappy change and before using any barrier creams. Stop using the treatment cream once the rash is gone and go back to the routine described above.

The type of cream advised may vary. Creams may contain a mild steroid, an anti-thrush medicine or an antibiotic. Steroids reduce inflammation and are the usual treatment for common nappy rash. Anti-thrush cream is usually effective for thrush. Occasionally a common nappy rash becomes infected with bacteria and an antibiotic cream would then be advised.

Other treatments . Sometimes an anti-thrush medicine is advised if there is thrush in the babies mouth. This is not serious but sometimes it passes down the gut to infect the nappy area. An antibiotic medicine is occasionally advised if an infection of the nappy area becomes severe.

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