

Diaper Rash

Definition

- Any rash on the skin covered by a diaper
- Diaper-wearing age group (birth to 3 years)

Health Information

Symptoms

- Mild rashes just have areas of pink dry skin.
- Severe rashes have areas of red skin. In some areas, the skin may become raw or even bleed.
- Yeast infections are bright red. The borders are very sharp. Small red bumps or even pimples may occur just beyond the border. Yeast rashes usually cover large areas.
- Pink rashes are not painful, but raw ones can be very painful. This can lead crying and poor sleep.

Cause

- Mild rashes can be caused by the drying effect of soaps.
- Stool and urine left on skin can combine to make ammonia. Ammonia can cause a mild chemical burn.
- Stools left on the skin can be very irritating because they contain bacteria. Urine alone has no germs in it and usually doesn't irritate the skin.
- Rashes around the anus are common during bouts of diarrhea.
- Rashes from irritants can get a secondary infection with yeast. Less commonly it can happen with bacteria.

Prevention of Recurrent Diaper Rash

- Change diapers more often. Especially try to prevent skin contact with stool.
- Rinse the baby's skin with lots of warm water when cleaning off stool. Don't depend on diaper wipes alone
- Be sure to clean stool off all the skin folds. Cleaning the scrotum can be a challenge.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Diaper rashes are very common in babies.
- Often caused by not cleaning stool off the skin soon enough.
- Here's some care advice that should help.

2. Change More Often:

- Change diapers more often to prevent skin contact with stool.
- You may want to get up once during the night to change the diaper. Do this until the rash is under control.

3. Rinse with Warm Water:

- Rinse the baby's skin with lots of warm water after cleaning off stool.
- Wash with a mild soap (such as Dove) only after stools. Reason: Using soap often can slow healing.
- Do not depend on diaper wipes alone for removing stool. Reason: They leave a film of bacteria on the skin.

4. **Leave the Bottom Open to Air:**
 - Expose the bottom to air as much as possible.
 - Attach the diaper loosely at the waist to help with air exposure.
 - When napping, take the diaper off and lay your child on a towel. Reason: Dryness reduces the risk of yeast infections.
5. **Anti-Yeast Cream:**
 - Most diaper rashes respond to 3 days of warm water cleansing and air exposure. If you've tried this or the rash is bright red, suspect a yeast infection.
 - Buy an anti-yeast cream such as Lotrimin. No prescription is needed.
 - Use Lotrimin cream 2 times per day.
6. **Raw Skin:**
 - If the bottom is very raw, soak in warm water for 10 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of baking soda to the tub of warm water.
 - Do this 2 times per day for a few days.
 - Then, put Lotrimin cream on the rash.
7. **Sore or Scab on End of the Penis:**
 - Use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed.
 - Do this 3 times per day.
 - Reason: The sore is a bacterial infection that can cause painful urination.
8. **Diarrhea Rash:**
 - If your child has diarrhea and an anal rash, use a protective ointment. Examples are petroleum jelly, A&D or Desitin.
 - This forms a barrier between the skin and the stool.
 - Otherwise, these generally are not needed.
 - Caution: Wash off the skin before putting the ointment on.
9. **What to Expect:**
 - With proper treatment, most diaper rashes are better in 3 days.
 - If the rash does not respond, a yeast infection has probably occurred. If so, start an anti-yeast cream.
10. **Return to Child Care:**
 - Diaper rashes cannot be spread to others. Yeast ones do not spread. Bacterial ones have a small risk until they are on an antibiotic ointment.
 - Your child does not need to miss any child care.

Call Your Doctor If

- Rash isn't much better after 3 days of using anti-yeast cream
- It starts to look infected (with sores and scabs)
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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