

Diaper rash

What is diaper rash?

Diaper rash happens when your baby's skin gets irritated from wet or soiled diapers. It can happen if your child has very sensitive skin or when urine or stool in the diaper touches skin for too long, making it sore and red.

What causes diaper rash?

- Irritation by urine and stool
- Irritation from eating new foods
- Sensitive skin
- Irritation by diarrhea
- Yeast infection, also known as *Candida*
- Snug-fitting, air-tight pants or plastic-covered diapers that prevent wetness from drying or that rub the skin

How can I prevent diaper rash?

The best way to prevent diaper rash is to change your baby's diaper often, especially if your baby has diarrhea. If your child has diarrhea, you can also help to prevent diaper rash with an unscented barrier cream, such as petroleum jelly or a zinc oxide-based paste, to protect the skin.

How can I treat diaper rash?

- When you change your baby's diaper, wash her bottom with mild soap and lukewarm water (just water if there is no stool) or unscented baby wipes. Rinse and

pat dry. If the skin is really sore and red, it may be less painful to wash the area in a warm bath.

- Use an unscented barrier ointment, such as petroleum jelly or a cream with zinc oxide, to protect and lubricate the area. For diapers soiled with stool, clean the area (as described above), then generously apply the barrier ointment to the skin. If changing a wet diaper (without any stool), reapply the barrier ointment only if needed.
- Do not share creams and ointments with other children and don't touch the affected skin and then put your fingers back into the jar. Use a different finger if you need more ointment.
- Do not use baby or talcum powders. If inhaled, talcum-containing powders can cause severe lung damage and breathing problems in babies.
- If possible, before you apply a barrier cream, keep your baby's diaper off for short periods to expose their skin to open air. This can help your baby feel better and heal the rash faster.

What is *Candida*?

Candida is a yeast that naturally exists in our intestines (organs where food is digested). If it overgrows it can cause a rash or infection.

What are the symptoms of *Candida* diaper rash?

Candida usually causes diaper rash in the deepest part of the skin, like the groin area and buttocks. The rash is usually very red, with raised red spots and well-defined edges.

How do I treat a *Candida* infection?

- *Candida* skin infections are treated with an antifungal cream that is prescribed by a doctor.
- When you change your baby's diaper, wash the diaper area with mild soap and warm water, rinse and pat dry. Apply the cream to the rash according to the prescription instructions.
- Wash your hands carefully after each diaper change.

When should I call the doctor?

- If the rash is severe, or gets worse even when you treat it.
- If the rash also has blisters or boils, pus or discharge, or is associated with a fever.

Reviewed by the following CPS committees

- Community Paediatrics Committee

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