

## What is diaper rash?

Diaper rash is a common skin problem. It:

- causes red and blotchy skin to form in the diaper area.
- may have raised red spots or sores.
- may look deep red and be painful and warm to touch.

## What causes it?

There are many causes of diaper rash. Any of these can cause diaper rash:

- **Pee (urine) and poop (stool) in the diaper.** Sometimes a rash may form after the skin has been exposed to pee or poop.
- **New foods.** New foods may change the way your child's poop looks and how often they poop. This may cause the skin in the diaper area to be red and sore. This is normally not a sign of a food allergy.
- **New products.** New disposable diapers, wipes or soaps can cause a rash. Sometimes dye (colors) in disposable diapers can cause a rash.
- **Irritation from current products.** Disposable diapers or wipes or soaps that you've been using for weeks or even months can cause a rash. Even though your child has not had a rash before with these products, a rash can develop after using them for a long time.
- **Rubbing.** Diaper rash may form if diapers fit too tight. Tight clothes that rub against the skin can also cause a rash.
- **Infection.** A skin infection can cause a rash. It can start in the skin folds in the diaper area, and then spread to surrounding skin.
- **Medicine (antibiotics).** Sometimes a medicine used to help fight an infection can cause diaper rash.

The cause of your child's diaper rash may be different each time there is a new rash.

## Who gets diaper rash?

Diaper rash is common in babies up to 15 months of age. However, diaper rash can form in children who still wear diapers or pull-ups. Diaper rash is less common in children who wear underwear.

## How will it affect my child?

Diaper rash can be painful. Your child may cry or fuss more than normal when the area is touched with diaper changes or baths.



## How is it treated?

### At home

- Change your child's diaper as soon as you can after it is wet or dirty.
  - Every time you change your child's diaper, pat the whole diaper area with a wipe.
  - Gently wash with soap and water using a soft washcloth daily and with baths. Be sure to clean in the skin folds
  - Pat the skin dry or let the skin air-dry before putting on ointment or cream and a clean diaper.
  - Don't use baby wipes that have alcohol. They can make the rash worse.
- Use an ointment or cream with each diaper change. Try Vaseline®, A & D Ointment®, Desitin®, Triple Paste®, or plain petroleum jelly or zinc oxide.
- Ointments and creams should be put all over the buttocks and diaper area. Think of "frosting a cake" when applying ointments and creams.
- When using a cream, do **not** remove all the cream from the skin with each diaper change, even if dirty.
- Gently pat away the stool, being careful not to rub off the cream, and then reapply the cream.
- If your child gets a rash from the disposable diapers you are using, try another brand.

If your child's diaper rash does not get better within a few days after starting home treatment, another medicine may be needed. Please call your child's doctor if the rash is not improving.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- a rash that does not go away.
- a rash that gets worse after you followed the treatment directions.
- a rash that begins to bleed or has pus filled bumps.
- special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**