

## What is diaper rash?

- Diaper rash is any rash that affects your child's diaper area.
- It is a common condition in infants.

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## What causes it?

- Too much moisture in the diaper area.
- Chafing or rubbing.
- Yeast or bacterial infection.
- Skin stays in contact with urine or feces for a long period.
- Allergic reaction to the material a diaper is made of.
- Allergic reaction to products that come into contact with the skin.

## Who can get it?

- Many babies between the ages of 4 months and 15 months get diaper rash.
- It is most common between the ages of 8 to 10 months.
- It is more common in babies who have many stools, especially if the diaper is not changed overnight.
- It is more common in babies who have started to eat solid foods.
- It is more common in babies who are taking antibiotics.
- It is more common in babies who are nursing from mothers who are taking antibiotics.
- Babies with a sensitive skin condition, such as eczema, are more likely to get diaper rash.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

- The skin might be red.
- The rash is usually on the stomach, genitals, and inside the skin folds of the thighs and bottom.
- The rash may be warmer than other skin.
- Your baby may seem uncomfortable, especially when you are changing her diaper or washing her diaper area.
- More severe cases may have painful, open sores.

## Is it contagious?

- Diaper rash is usually not contagious.

## How is it treated?

- It may be helpful to remove the diaper and let your baby's skin be open to the air. Set your baby on a few cloth diapers or on a blanket over a plastic sheet. Use the time to play.
- If you use disposable baby wipes and your baby has a rash, you may need to switch to another brand or stop use all together. Plain water is best.
- Some products can irritate young skin. If you use harsh detergent, bleach, or fabric softener, you may need to change brands or stop using the product.
- Use a thick ointment such as Desitin or Balmex on your baby's bottom. It helps protect the skin. Apply after each changing. Ask your doctor first.
- Avoid using adult products on your baby's skin.
- You may want to try using a different brand of diapers if you think they are irritating your baby's skin.
- Avoid using talcum powder. If inhaled, it could irritate your baby's lungs.
- Avoid using cornstarch. It may help bacteria grow in your baby's diaper area.
- The best treatment is prevention. See the suggestions below.

## How long does it last?

- Mild cases may clear up in 3 to 4 days without any treatment.
- Some cases take several days to improve, even with treatment.
- The rash can last for weeks.

### **Can it be prevented?**

- Keep the diaper area dry and clean. Change your baby's diaper often. Babies usually have 6-8 wet diapers every 24 hours.
- Avoid using disposable baby wipes. They can irritate or dry out the skin. Wash your baby with each changing using water instead. Use a water bottle, wet washcloth, or soak a cotton ball in water. Pat the skin to clean it. Do not rub.
- Avoid using harsh soap. Gentle soap is best. Using soap once a day is enough.
- Gently pat the diaper area dry after washing it. Do not rub it or use a hair dryer.
- Avoid dressing your child in plastic pants. They do not let the diaper area get enough air.
- Avoid using tight fitting diapers that could rub against the skin.
- Use mild detergents to wash diapers.
- Avoid using fabric softeners or antistatic sheets when washing diapers.

### **When should I call the doctor?**

- Call your doctor if your baby has a diaper rash that does not go away after 1 or 2 days.
- Call the doctor if your baby has a rash with blisters or bumps. Call if the rash is crusty, oozing pus, or bleeding.
- Call the doctor if your baby has a fever with her rash.
- Call the doctor if your baby has a rash and also has many liquid stools or urine that has a very strong smell. These symptoms could be signs of dehydration.
- Call the doctor if there is still a rash after treatment.
- Call your doctor to ask which ointment is best to use on your baby's skin.
- Call the doctor if you have questions or concerns about your child's treatment or condition.

### **Quick Answers**

- Diaper rash is any rash that affects your child's diaper area.
- It can be caused by too much moisture in the diaper area, chafing or rubbing, infection, or an allergic reaction.
- Many babies between the ages of 4 months and 15 months get diaper rash.
- The rash is usually on the stomach, genitals, and inside the skin folds of the thighs and bottom.
- Diaper rash is not contagious.
- Some products can irritate young skin. If you use harsh detergent, bleach, or fabric softener, you may need to change brands or stop using the product.
- The rash can last from a few days to a few weeks.
- To prevent diaper rash, keep the diaper area dry and clean.
- Call the doctor if there is still a rash after treatment.

### **References**

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