

Diaper Rash Care

Diaper rashes are very common. They are caused by skin irritation or breakdown from acid in urine or stool (especially with diarrheal illnesses), chemical irritation, bacteria, yeast and friction. Most diaper rashes can be prevented or treated with these simple instructions. If your baby's rash is not responding to the steps below see your physician as prescription creams may need to be added.

1. **Change diapers frequently**

At least every feed or every 2-3 hours, check more frequently while awake if it is a severe rash. Using disposable diapers which are more absorbent than cloth diapers until the rash resolves may be helpful.

2. **Wiping**

Wipe gently so as not to cause further skin breakdown, and avoid rubbing. When at home using water and a soft cotton cloth is best. If the skin is broken down a very gentle way to clean is with mineral oil and cotton balls.

If using wipes choose gentle fragrance-free wipes. If your baby has a bad rash you can rinse the wipes in warm water before use to remove any chemicals and help with ease of cleaning.

3. **Dry your baby's skin**

This can be accomplished with supervised airtime on the change pad for a few minutes. You can also use a hair dryer on a cool setting - keep your hand close to your baby's bum to ensure the air is not hot.

When there is not time for airtime you can use a dry cotton cloth to gently dab the area before applying creams.

4. **Barrier creams**

Barrier creams are designed to protect your baby's skin from moisture, and allow it to heal without further irritation. Think of it as a 'bum bandaid'. Apply liberally every diaper change over the rash area.

Vaseline - This is a very inexpensive and effective barrier cream. Apply liberally every diaper change. Vaseline is also very easy to wipe off.

Zinc based creams (Desitin, zincofax, Penaten, Sudocrem are all examples) - while they are an excellent barrier be cautious with wiping as they tend to stick to your baby's skin. You do not need to wipe all the cream off every diaper change, as long as you can clean the stool. If using a zinc based cream you can make it easier to wipe by mixing it 1:1 with vaseline.

5. **Daily soapy bum wash** - you do not need to do a full bath but it is important to do a soapy bum wash with gentle baby soap at least once a day. It will clean any residues/ bacteria as well as it helps to reset the skin pH.
6. **Yeast** - yeast is a common cause of diaper rashes, or can worsen a pre-existing rash. If you see distinct pimple like lesions, and/or there is redness in the bum crack or skin folds this is likely yeast. If you see this you can apply over the counter **clotrimazole (brand name Canesten) or Nystatin** 2 times a day if mild, every diaper change if severe. Always apply a barrier cream on top of medicated creams.

If the above steps do not improve your baby's rash within a few days, please see your physician for assessment. The rash may take many days to fully resolve, as long as it is improving you should be ok.

***Note Polysporin or over the counter antibiotics creams are generally not recommended as they can cause an irritant rash with repeated use, especially on sensitive skin. There are better prescription alternatives.