



MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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DIAPER RASH

Diaper rash affects most babies at one time or another. While it is not serious, it can result in discomfort for your baby and worry for you. This handout will describe some of the causes of diaper rash, what you can do to prevent it and how you can treat it. By knowing what to look for, you can keep your baby happy and comfortable.

WHAT IS DIAPER RASH?

Diaper rash is a term that describes any skin irritation in the diaper area. The common causes are: wetness, not changing the diapers often enough, and a combination of urine and feces that irritate the baby's skin. Over-cleansing with soaps, antibiotic usage, yeast and other infections can also play a part.

Diaper rash will occasionally occur for no apparent reason and disappear without treatment.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT DIAPER RASH?

- ◆ Change diapers immediately after each bowel movement and as frequently as necessary to keep your baby dry. Wet skin is easily irritated by bowel movements.

Avoid soaps and don't over-cleanse. Harsh scrubbing after each diaper change may damage the outer layer of the skin. Despite the products be advertised as sensitive or hypoallergenic, sometimes wipes can irritate the skin.

- ◆ Apply a thin layer of ointment (Petroleum Jelly, Vaseline, Aquaphor) after the skin is thoroughly dried for protection against wetness, and avoid scented lotions or powders that can irritate your baby's skin.

HOW CAN DIAPER RASH BE TREATED?

Despite your best efforts, your baby may still get diaper rash. If this happens there are steps you can take to help eliminate the rash.

- ◆ Check your baby's diaper about every hour, and change them immediately if they are wet or soiled. Make sure that your baby's diaper area is completely dry before closing up the fresh diaper.
- ◆ If the diaper area is raw, soak the area in a tub of warm water to which you have added one or two tablespoons of baking soda.
- ◆ Apply a cream, such as zinc oxide paste (Balmex, Desitin, Butt Paste), which stays on longer than an ointment. This is a barrier coat that will seal out the irritants from the urine and bowel movements. With each diaper change, make sure the skin is clean and ensure that a layer of paste covers the baby's skin.
- ◆ Instead of wiping the area clean, try running a stream of water from a squeeze bottle. This is gentle to the baby's skin and an easy way to rinse off the stool and urine in the diaper area. Put your baby in a sink or tub for

easy rinsing.

Call our office if:

- ◆ The rash isn't much better after three days of home care.
- ◆ The rash becomes bright red, raw or bleeds.
- ◆ Pimples, blisters, boils, sores or crusts develop.
- ◆ The rash spreads beyond the diaper area.
- ◆ Your child is male & circumcised and the end of the penis develops a sore or scab.
- ◆ Your child develops an unexplained fever (>100°F).
- ◆ The rash causes enough pain to interfere with your baby's sleep.

ARE CLOTH OR DISPOSABLE DIAPERS BETTER?

There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Some infants may be better suited to one type of diaper. Talk with your pediatrician to find out which is best for your baby.

REMEMBER NEVER LEAVE THE BABY ALONE ON THE CHANGING TABLE OR ON ANY SURFACE ABOVE THE FLOOR. FALLS ARE A COMMON CAUSE OF HOUSEHOLD INJURY.

If you change diapers often, your baby can usually avoid the discomfort of diaper rash. Talk with your child's pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns about diaper rash.