

What is a diaper rash?

A diaper rash is any rash on the skin area covered by a diaper. Almost every child gets diaper rashes. Most of them are due to prolonged contact with moisture, bacteria, and ammonia. The ammonia and other skin irritants are made by the reaction of bacteria from bowel movements to certain chemicals in the urine. Bouts of diarrhea cause rashes in most children. Diaper rashes occur less frequently with disposable diapers.

How long will it last?

With proper treatment these rashes are usually better in 3 days. If the rash does not improve with treatment, then your child probably has a yeast infection (Candida). If your child has a yeast infection, then the rash becomes bright red and raw, covers a large area, and is surrounded by red dots. You will need a special cream for yeast infections.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Change diapers frequently**

The key to successful treatment is keeping the area dry and clean so it can heal itself. Exposure to stools causes most of the skin damage. Make sure that your baby's bottom is completely dry before closing up the fresh diaper.

- **Increase air exposure**

Leave your baby's bottom exposed to the air as much as possible each day. Practical times are during naps or after bowel movements. Put a towel or diaper under your baby. Avoid airtight plastic pants for a few days.

- **Rinse the skin with warm water**

Do not wash the skin with soap after every diaper change because it can damage the skin. Use a mild soap (like Dove) only after bowel movements. If the diaper rash is quite raw, use warm water soaks for 20 minutes three times a day.

- **Nighttime care**

At night use disposable diapers that lock wetness inside the diaper and away from the skin. Try cortisone ointment on the outside area. Until the rash is better, awaken your baby once during the night to change the diaper.

- **Creams and ointments**

If your baby's skin is dry and cracked, apply an ointment to protect the skin after you wash off each bowel movement. Some of the best diaper ointments are Calmoseptine or Booty Goo. A barrier ointment is also needed whenever your child has diarrhea. A good barrier ointment is aquafor.

Your baby's ointment is _____.

- **Yeast infections**

If the rash is bright red or does not start getting better after 3 days of warm water cleaning and air exposure, your child probably has a yeast infection. Apply Lotrimin cream (no prescription necessary) four times a day for at least 7-10 days.

How can I prevent diaper rash?

Changing the diaper right after your child has a bowel movement and rinsing the skin with warm water are the most effective things you can do to prevent diaper rash.

When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The rash looks infected (pimples, blisters, boils, sores).
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Call within 24 hours if:

- The rash isn't much better in 3 days.
- The diaper rash becomes bright red or raw.
- You have other concerns or questions.