



Dr. Lara Varisco Leonhardt, MD

Bee well pediatrics



What is cradle cap?

Cradle cap is a common skin condition in babies. Cradle cap appears as red patches with oily, yellow scales or crusts on the scalp. It often begins in the first weeks of life. With treatment it will clear up in a few weeks. Without treatment it will go away on its own after several months.

What is the cause?

Cradle cap is probably caused by hormones from the mother that crossed the placenta before birth. The hormones cause the oil glands in the skin to become overactive and release more oil than normal. This causes the dead skin cells that normally fall off to "stick" to the skin and form yellow crusts and scales.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Antidandruff shampoo**

Buy an antidandruff shampoo (nonprescription) at the drugstore, ie: selsun blue, head and shoulders. Wash your baby's hair, behind ears, and between eyes with it once a day and let sit for 10 minutes.

- **Softening thick crusts**

If your child's scalp is very crusty, put some baby oil or olive oil on the scalp 1 hour before washing to soften the crust. Wash all the oil off, however, or it may worsen the cradle cap.

- **Resistant cases of cradle cap**

If the area is very red and irritated, apply 1% hydrocortisone cream (nonprescription) once a day.