

## DIAPER RASH

Almost every baby develops diaper rash at some point. “Diaper rash” refers to an irritation of the skin beneath the diaper, which can range from mild redness to severe open sores. Many factors contribute to diaper rash, but the most common cause is the rubbing of the diaper against the skin combined with moisture from urine and stool. Children with sensitive skin are more prone to diaper rash.

Diaper rash can be treated by gentle cleansing with water (small amounts of mild soap may be necessary). Commercial wipes should be avoided when skin is irritated. Thorough drying is important and air exposure is helpful. A protective coating of a product such as Vaseline, A&D ointment, Balmex, Desitin, etc. is helpful. Frequent diaper changes are also important. These measures should resolve rashes from simple irritation in a few days.

Another common type of diaper rash is caused by an overgrowth of yeast. Yeast is a microorganism found in normal stool and on normal skin, but in some cases the yeast grows at an excessive rate. Antibiotic use is sometimes associated with yeast overgrowth. Medicated creams are usually necessary to get the yeast back in control and clear up the rash. These creams contain an anti-yeast medicine and are available both over-the-counter and by prescription.

You may notice that diaper rashes particularly occur with changes in your child’s diet. This is due to variations in stool composition. Similarly, diaper rash occurs more easily with diarrhea.

Choice of diaper type (cloth-vs-disposable) has very little impact on diaper rash.

Since many skin diseases often show up first in the diaper area, persistent diaper rash warrants a visit to the pediatrician.