

# Nappy rash

## What causes nappy rash?

The most common cause of nappy rash in babies is irritation of the skin. Constant moisture and rubbing can cause damage to the skin.

### Moisture from urine (wee) and faeces (poo)

This is the main cause of nappy rash. The longer the nappy is wet or dirty the higher the risk.

### Chemical irritation

- Urine and faeces contain irritating substances which may lead to a rash if they are in contact with the skin for too long.
- Too much soap can irritate the skin and dry it out.
- Detergents and soaking solutions can irritate if they remain in cloth nappies.

### Nappy rash is made worse by:

- Diarrhoea
- Not changing the nappy often enough
- Plastic (polyester) pants can cause the skin to sweat

## Signs and symptoms

- The skin around the nappy area looks red and raw or may look red and spotty
- Skin area can be sore or itchy when the area is wiped
- Your baby may be unsettled or irritable

## How to prevent nappy rash

- Change nappies as soon as possible after they become wet or soiled and preferably once during the night.
- Clean the nappy area with cotton wool or cloths dampened with lukewarm water. Some baby wipes can irritate the skin.
- Let your baby have some nappy free time each day.
- Avoid using plastic pants.
- Wash and rinse all cloth nappies thoroughly.
- After each nappy change, apply a thin layer of protective cream to your baby's nappy area. For example, zinc and castor oil, nappy paste or soft paraffin.



- Try good quality disposable nappies as these allow the moisture to be absorbed quickly keeping the skin dry.

## When to seek medical attention

- If the rash persists for more than a few days after using protective creams and ointments, it may mean that there is an underlying skin infection present such as thrush or bacterial infection. Thrush is a fungal infection which thrives in warm, moist areas. The doctor will usually prescribe a cream to treat the infection.
- When a nappy rash is difficult to treat, it may indicate that there is an underlying skin condition such as seborrheic dermatitis or psoriasis. This needs to be diagnosed and treated by a doctor.

If you have any other concerns take you child to the doctor or emergency department.



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