



WE'RE READY FOR YOUR CALL

For questions about childhood health and development, visit StLouisChildrens.org/Health.

For assistance with scheduling an appointment or choosing a pediatrician or pediatric specialist, call 314.454.KIDS (5437) or 800.678.KIDS (5437).

St. Louis Children's Hospital
One Children's Place
St. Louis, Missouri 63110
314.454.6000

StLouisChildrens.org



THE BATTLE AGAINST DIAPER RASH

When to call the doctor:

- If any blisters, sores, pimples or boils appear
- If the rash is not healing within three days of home care treatment
- If your child develops any illness symptoms or fever



The Battle Against Diaper Rash

With wet diapers continually holding moisture and chemicals against the skin, it is no wonder that many babies are destined to encounter diaper rash. While some diaper rashes may not be preventable, much can be done to minimize the problem.

What causes diaper rash?

The leading factor is generally moisture that, when constantly held against the baby's bottom, breaks down the skin's protective barriers. This causes cracking of the skin, allowing chemicals and microorganisms in urine and stools to reach the deeper layers of skin.

Diaper dermatitis

The most common form of diaper rash is identified medically as chemical or diaper dermatitis. It usually is caused by contact with ammonia, a chemical present in soiled diapers. Diaper dermatitis initially appears as a bright red rash that can lead to painful open sores if not treated.

This dermatitis also can be caused by dyes used in some diapers or soaps and chemicals in moistened wipes used to clean infants. These wipes also can damage the skin's natural protective oils.

Indirect causes

Gastrointestinal illnesses, such as diarrhea, can increase the frequency and wetness of bowel movements, leading to increased skin irritation.

Some diaper rashes are caused by a yeast called *Candida Albicans*, which may occur if your child has thrush or is taking antibiotics. This rash can cover a large area. It usually appears bright red or raw and is surrounded by red bumps or spots.

Topical medication may be needed to treat this type of diaper rash.

Do some children have diaper rashes more often than others?

Some children get diaper rash often, possibly because they are not as quick to wake up or express distress about having a diaper that needs to be changed.

Can anything be done to prevent diaper rash?

Disposable diapers are supposed to reduce the occurrence of diaper rashes. These include diapers with linings designed to keep moisture away from the skin. Other disposable diapers contain gelatinized fibers that absorb moisture.

What can be done to treat diaper rash?

Good skin care is important to prevent diaper rash outbreaks or clear them up before they become painful.

Keep diaper area dry and clean: change diapers frequently, every 1-2 hours during the day and check at least once at night if a rash is present.

Gentle cleansing: diaper wipes and soap can dry and further irritate the skin. To clean urine, use warm water on a wash cloth, squirt bottle or soaks in the tub. To clean stool, use water and a mild soap.



Dry bottom: leave diaper creams and diapers off, exposing skin directly to air whenever possible. Poke holes in disposable diapers or fasten them loosely to promote air circulation. We do not recommend the use of powders on babies. Babies may breathe in the powder and cause them to become ill.

Barrier creams: barrier ointments such as Desitin, A&D or Vaseline supplement the skin's natural protectants. An ointment protects the skin two ways. It's waterproof and keeps moisture away from the skin and has a neutralizer against irritating chemicals.

This information was provided by the Division of Dermatology at St. Louis Children's Hospital.