

# DIAPER RASH

## What causes diaper rash?

Diaper rash (or diaper dermatitis) is one of the most common problems in infancy. The diaper area is covered by cloth or plastic-covered diapers and creates a damp and warm environment. This environment encourages the growth of bacteria and yeast, and increases irritation from urine (pee) and stool (poop).

Also, the bacteria in the stool can break down the urine to free ammonia. This raises the pH of the skin and activates digestive enzymes (that are normally inactive in the acidic stool). All of this will add to the breakdown of the skin in the diaper area.

The baby's skin is more sensitive to irritants. Early signs of diaper rash appear as mild redness. As the rash gets worse, the skin can breakdown more, leading to weepy skin or large areas of raw skin .

## Keys to treating diaper rash

1. Keep the urine and stool away from the skin in the diaper area. This is the most important part of treatment. The skin will heal if it is given a chance to
2. After a baby poops, **gently** clean the area but be careful not to rub off any healing skin. If commercial wipes are irritating, plain water in a bath can be used. You do not need to clean the skin every time your baby pees.
3. If the diaper rash is bad, consider switching to disposable diapers. They can 'wick' away the moisture better than cloth diapers.
4. Once the area is clean, place a generous amount of a zinc-based paste to the diaper area. Examples of common diaper pastes are **Desitin, CeraVe Béb , Sudocream, Ihle's paste, Zincofax, Aveeno diaper cream** and **Penaten**. Think of icing a cake... this is the layer that will protect the skin. (Note: the zinc creams might 'clog' the cloth diapers)
  1. When changing the diaper, remove as much poop while leaving as much diaper cream on the skin. If there is a bit of poop on the cream, that is okay. Add more diaper cream after. It is very important to let the skin continue to heal underneath the cream and not rub off the new healing skin.
5. Sometimes, your doctor will prescribe an anti fungal and/or an anti-inflammatory cream



Diaper rash with red open sores



Applying diaper cream "like icing a cake"



Healing diaper area 4 weeks later