

Tips for Dealing With Diaper Rash

Causes:

- Chafing, vigorous wiping, or rubbing (friction)
- Chemical irritants like diaper materials, baby wipes, bath soaps, laundry detergents or softeners, lotions, or scented diaper ointments
- pH disturbances, which can occur when the breastfeeding mother takes antibiotics
- Moisture build-up and poor air flow
- Prolonged contact with feces or urine

Treatment and Management

1. Gently cleanse the area when soiled. Some infants do fine with regular commercial wipes, while others do better with hypoallergenic commercial wipes or water and a soft washcloth when the skin barrier is not intact. Cotton balls soaked with mineral oil can also be used to gently remove feces.
2. Leave the diaper area open to air dry for several minutes or use a blow dryer on a low heat setting to ensure dryness.
3. Apply a good barrier ointment to protect the skin from further irritation and allow the underlying skin to heal. Effective barrier ointments tend to be sticky/adherent and have no added fragrance or color that can be irritating. Zinc oxide (mineral ointment) also promotes healing and provides increased protection; these ointments are often clear or white.
4. When friction and moisture are the chief problems, use diaper powders such as corn starch, but prevent inhalation of powders into the infant or child's lungs. [\[Sh](#)
5. A technique called "crusting" can be used for hard-to-treat diaper rashes with significant skin breakdown. "Crusting" is done by alternating layers of a protective barrier ointment with a powder, such as corn starch or ostemay powder. Layering

on the ointment and powder means that during diaper changes, only the soiled outer layer of the “crust” needs to be removed, ensuring that the underlying skin remains constantly protected. Again, avoid inhalation of powders by the infant or caregiver. The whole “crust” should be gently removed during bathing and then reapplied after gently drying the area.

6. For recurrent rashes, consider more frequent diaper changes and/or trying a different type of diaper. Also, consider using hypoallergenic laundry detergents, bath, and skin care products.

Yeast or Fungal Infections

Diaper rashes typically improve within a few days. If not, then the infant may need to be considered for treatment with medications. Although normal intact skin provides a good barrier against infections caused by common yeast and bacteria, the diaper area is a moist, warm environment hospitable to yeast, fungus, and bacteria to grow and cause skin infections. Secondary skin infections in the diaper area may develop after a simple diaper rash was initially present because the normal skin barrier is compromised. Skin infections in the diaper area tend to look angrier and may affect the skin folds more than typical diaper rashes, and there can be closed or open sores. Diaper-area skin infections often respond to medicated treatments for yeast and fungus, such as canesten cream.