



Nappy Rash

It's cause, prevention and treatment.

Nappy Rash Information

Most 'Nappy Rash' is caused by the breakdown of urine (naturally producing ammonia which can irritate the skin) or leaving the baby for too long after it has soiled. To avoid nappy rash change your baby frequently and clean them thoroughly.

Nappy Rash often occurs when the baby is teething, as the pH of the baby's urine changes and can irritate the skin. It may also occur when the baby has had a change in diet or has been introduced to a new food group. Some disposable nappy wipes can also cause nappy rash, use water and cotton wool, or a cloth wipe instead.

Occasionally starting using real nappies can cause the skin to look a little red for a few days – this should not turn into a real rash and should settle down quickly. Babies using real nappies will sometimes get some redness if put in a disposable. If you suspect your real nappies please do check that you are washing them in a gentle non bio powder, aren't using fabric softeners and are making sure they are well rinsed. A small number of children are sensitive to the washing products, with these you may need to do extra rinses or use a special washing powder. Children with sensitive skin often do better in real nappies once you get your system right.

Research has shown that occurrence rates of nappy rash are the same for disposables and reusable, modern breathable wraps are a great improvement on old plastic pants, wetness alone does not harm babies skin; however one way liners will keep them drier and more comfortable so are recommended at night when the baby is in it's nappy for longest.

Many advertisements for disposable nappies have in the past claimed that their nappies eliminate nappy rash because they absorb all the wetness from the babies skin. They no longer say this as it has been proven untrue. However rather than eliminate the problem disposables may inadvertently be causing the problem by discouraging the parents from frequent nappy changes. Cost can be a factor in this too; having paid so much for a disposable you want it to last as long as possible. Changing a real nappy costs far less.

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Tips for Treating Nappy Rash.

The key part of treatment is to make sure your baby's skin is clean, particularly changing them as soon as possible after a soiled nappy. If they are very dirty a quick bottom bath in the sink can help.

Plain water is the best thing for general bottom cleaning, however if the baby is sore you can try -

- Expressed breast milk – it really does work!
- Cold camomile or Rooibos (Redbush) tea works well too – make a mug leaving the bag in while it cools; use the tea to wash the bottom area.
- Many of the real nappy companies sell gentle bottom washes which can work well too.
- Avoid most commercial wipes, they can make things worse (try one on your lips the alcohol can make them sting)

Fresh air is important too; let baby go bare as much as possible. Try leaving the nappy off for a while with your baby kicks on a towel, fresh air aids skin healing. If your son wees upward pull a corner of the towel over him to save a shower.

Alternatively, use a raw silk liner next to the skin. Raw silk has therapeutic qualities, which can heal sore skin. Bamboo has also been reported as being anti bacterial.

It is not necessary to use creams at all times, only when your baby's skin is sore and a simple wash isn't working. Many of the creams stop the skin breathing as well as reducing the absorbency of the nappy, so only use when really needed.

If nappy rash persists, seek medical advice, occasionally rashes are caused by a fungal infection called thrush, or be the start of other conditions like eczema.

If your child does develop eczema do talk to us, we can work with you to find a nappy and system that works for your child. Remember many babies with sensitive skin have fewer rashes with real nappies as you are in control about how they are washed, where as you have no control of the chemicals used in disposables.