

Cradle cap

What is cradle cap?

Cradle cap (seborrhea) is a common skin and scalp condition that occurs when the oil glands in the scalp produce too much oil. Scaly, flaky, greasy crusts may form on the scalp. The crusts may also form in the eyebrows and behind the ears.

How should I care for my child?

1. To loosen the crusts, apply baby oil, olive oil, or mineral oil to the scalp about 10 minutes before shampooing. Gently rub the oil in. For extra thick crusts, allow the oil to soak into the crusts overnight. **Caution:** oil can cause breathing problems if babies get it in their mouth. Store it safely.
2. To remove the crusts while shampooing, use a fine-toothed baby comb and comb the hair in all directions. It is okay to gently comb over the soft spot on your baby's head.

If cradle cap lasts longer than 2 months:

1. Do the procedure above, using an anti-dandruff shampoo such as Head and Shoulders®, Sebulex®, or Selsun Blue®, 3 times in one week.
2. Continue using the anti-dandruff shampoo once a week until the cradle cap is improving. On other days you may use regular shampoo as desired.
3. 1% Hydrocortisone cream may be applied twice a day for up to 2 weeks.

When should I call the clinic?

- cradle cap becomes worse or looks infected
- cradle cap does not improve with the treatments listed in this sheet

What else do I need to know?

To prevent cradle cap from coming back:

- comb or brush the scalp gently every day
- shampoo the scalp every few days

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

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