

## Diaper rash

### What is a diaper rash?

Diaper rash is a skin irritation in the diaper area. It can hurt when the diaper is wet or soiled. Diaper rash can be mild, or it can become a condition that needs medical care.

### What are the signs of diaper rash?

The skin in the diaper area is pink or red, bumpy, peeling, and/or bleeding.

### What causes diaper rash?

Diaper rash is often caused by wetness from contact with urine or stool (bowel movements), soap that is too strong or harsh, or rubbing too hard while cleaning. With diarrhea, the wetness and irritation from the stool can lead to diaper rash. Frequent gentle rinsing of the diaper area can help prevent diaper rash. If the diaper rash is from diarrhea, see the education sheet, "Diarrhea".

### How should I care for my child?

Start treatment at the first sign of redness.

Keep the diaper area clean and dry by changing diapers more often than usual.

At every diaper change, using water only, clean your baby's bottom and between all skin folds well, gently removing all traces of creams. Do this in a tub or over the sink if possible, or use a squeeze bottle to run water over the skin. Pat dry. Do not rub with washcloths or towels. **Avoid diaper wipes;** they irritate the skin. To clean after a bowel movement, use Dove® unscented soap. It is less drying than other soaps.

Sunshine and air on the rash will help it heal. Spread a clean diaper or towel on the floor, in direct sunlight if possible. Place the baby tummy down on it with bottom bare, and let baby play for at least 15 minutes.

Use a moisturizing diaper rash cream with each diaper change to help protect the skin. Avoid using powder, cornstarch, or oil on the diaper area.

To help more air reach the diaper area, use larger diapers and put them on loosely. Do not use waterproof pants while your baby has a diaper rash. They may make it worse by trapping moisture.

Wash cloth diapers with hot water and a mild soap such as Dreft®. Rinse at least twice to get all the soap out. Avoid fabric softener dryer sheets, which allow softener to remain on the clothes causing irritation.

### When should I call the clinic?

- rash does not improve in a few days, or gets worse, even though you are following these directions.
- rash starts looking raw.
- pimples, blisters, or bleeding develop.
- the end of the penis has a sore or scabs
- rash spreads into large bright red patches all over the diaper area (except creases), and red dots appear around the edges.

### Questions?

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