

Pediatrician gives tips for dealing with diaper rash

March 19 2015, by Evie Polsley

Diaper rash may not be a serious condition, but it can be extremely painful. It is common and causes concern for many parents trying to comfort their child.

"Diaper rash is caused by the skin's reaction to irritants such as excessive moisture, lotions, wipes, diapers or a child's waste," said Bridget Boyd, MD, director of the newborn nursery at Loyola University Medical Center and assistant professor of pediatrics at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

According to Boyd, babies who have a liquid diet are more prone to diaper rash since they tend to produce looser stool.

"I recommend that parents put a barrier cream with zinc oxide on a baby's bottom with each diaper change during times of frequent stools. This keeps a barrier between the child's skin and the moisture that causes the irritation," Boyd said. "When choosing a cream make sure it's thick. In this case, the thicker the better."

Diaper rash may appear when a baby's skin is touched by a [new product](#) such as lotion, a new brand of paper diapers or wipes.

"If you've tried a new product on the baby's skin and notice a rash, go back to the old product for a few days. Then, try the new product again. If the rash happens again, don't use the new product," Boyd said.

She also suggests parents stay away from wipes with alcohol or fragrances, as they tend to irritate the skin.

"Even wipes that are marketed for use on sensitive skin can still irritate fragile skin, so if your child has diaper rash try to avoid the use of any wipes. Instead, use a small squeeze water bottle with warm water to clean the bottom and pat dry with a soft, clean washcloth," Boyd said.

If a child does develop diaper rash she suggests:

- Expose the affected area to as much air as you can. Consider having the baby take a nap on a burp rag or open cloth diaper.
- Change diapers often
- Oatmeal baths and soaks can help ease the pain of the raw skin
- If a child is older than two months, consider pain-relief medication

The number one cause of diaper rash is loose stool, so if your child is starting to get sick be sure to apply a barrier cream often.

Most diaper rash will go away with time and the proper treatment. Still, there are times when what appears to be diaper rash might be something more.

If the rash is causing pain and not improving with the normal treatment it's possible it could be a yeast rash.

"Healthy babies have yeast in their stool and diapers are a perfect breeding ground since yeast like to live in dark, warm, wet places. If the rash looks bright red, is in the skin folds and if it doesn't get better after three days of treating it you might want to have your pediatrician take a look to make sure there isn't anything concerning," Boyd said.

She also suggests contacting your pediatrician for any of these reasons:

- The [child](#) has a fever unrelated to another illness
- The raw [skin](#) oozes pus
- The rash is scabbed over
- The redness is spreading
- There is an abscess or boil

"Diaper rash isn't an emergency and most likely will go away in a few days. But if you are concerned, your pediatrician can always take a look," Boyd said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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