

## Treating Diaper Rash

The best way to treat diaper rash is to prevent it from starting in the first place. Try changing your baby's diapers regularly and rinsing with water only. It also helps to give your baby some time to "air out" each day by going without a diaper for a period of time. If despite your best efforts diaper rash does develop, try the following to clear up the rash:

- Change wet or soiled diapers often.
- Use clear water to cleanse the diaper area with each diaper change
- Using water in a squirt bottle lets you clean and rinse without rubbing
- Pat dry; do not rub; Allow the area to air dry fully
- Apply a thick layer of protective ointment or cream (such as one that contains zinc oxide or petrolatum) to form a protective coating on the skin; These ointments are usually thick and pasty and do not have to be completely removed at the next diaper change
- Remember, heavy scrubbing or rubbing will only damage the skin more

Check with your pediatrician if the rash:

- Has blisters or pus-filled sores
- Does not so away within 48 to 72 hours
- Gets worse
- Use creams with steroids only if your pediatrician recommends them; They are rarely needed and may be harmful

There has been much discussion about cloth and disposable diapers and their role in diaper rash. Research suggests that diaper rash is less common with the use of disposable diapers. In child care settings, children who wear super-absorbent disposable diapers tend to have lower rates of diaper rash. Regardless of which type of diaper you use, diaper rash occurs less often and is less severe when you change diapers often.

If you use a cloth diaper, you can use a stay-dry liner inside it to keep your baby drier. If you choose not to wash cloth diapers yourself, you can have a diaper service clean them. If you do your own washing, you will need to presoak heavily soiled diapers. Keep and wash soiled diapers separate from other clothes. Use hot water and double-rinse each wash. Do not use fabric softeners or antistatic products on the diapers because they may cause rashes on young, sensitive skin.

Whether you use cloth diapers, disposables, or both, always change diapers as needed to keep your baby clean, dry and healthy.