

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

Nappy rash

It is common for babies to develop some redness in the nappy area, especially in older babies who sleep through the night without a nappy change. The newer disposable nappies now make nappy rash less common. If it occurs it can be treated but it is better to try to prevent the rash developing.

What causes nappy rash?

Wet skin

- Long contact with wetness is the main cause of nappy rash. The longer the nappy is wet or soiled, the higher the risk of developing a rash
- The moisture results in the breakdown of the skin's protective outer barrier
- Urine and faeces contain irritating substances that can penetrate broken skin and cause irritation & inflammation (redness)
- Too much soap or synthetic cleaning agent, as is used in commercial 'bubble bath' products, dry out the skin and leave it open to cracks in the skin – which can then become a passage for infection
- When washing soiled cloth nappies- consider the soap you use, some products or ingredients can leave a residue in the nappy that can irritate & inflame the skin- rinse nappies well.

Yeast infection

- Irritated skin can quickly become infected with Candida, a fungal infection; this gives rise to small pustules (pimples) around the edge of the red area & requires a special cream from your chemist to clear it.

Prevention

- Change nappies as soon as possible after they become wet or soiled
- Cleanse your baby with good quality baby wipes or warm water and a cloth
- Avoid using plastic pants
- Wash and rinse all cloth nappies thoroughly.

If a rash develops

See your doctor if a rash develops and persists for more than a few days. It may need to be treated with a special cream or tests may be needed.

Difficult to treat nappy rash

If you have concerns about the rash or it is not responding to your care at home– speak with your doctor- there may be another skin condition affecting your baby.

Remember:

- Change your baby's soiled nappy as soon as possible
- Give your baby some 'nappy free' time each day
- Rinse cloth nappies well
- Speak with your doctor if the rash continues or changes in appearance.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by the NSW Child and Family Health CNC Network in developing this fact sheet.