



What is nappy rash?

Nappy rash is characterised by red, damp skin usually on the area that is in direct contact with the nappy. The rash may develop blisters or ulcers as it gets worse.

Nappy rash is a common condition, with up to 50% of children below 2 years of age affected at least once. On average the rash will last approximately 2 to 3 days.

WHAT CAUSES NAPPY RASH?

Nappy rash is caused by a number of factors. The skin covered by the nappy is moist and soft. As a result it is susceptible to damage. The damage can be caused by the skin rubbing against the nappy or from contact with urine and faeces. The amount of irritation that each baby can tolerate will vary.

HOW CAN I CARE FOR MY BABY'S SKIN?

Most cases of nappy rash can be successfully managed at home with the following measures.

Nappy-free time: Although it is not always practical, try to let your child go without a nappy whenever possible.

Cloth or disposable nappies: For children without nappy rash, the choice of nappy is a matter of personal preference. However, children struggling with nappy rash should wear disposable nappies that contain an absorbent gelling material in their core and have a breathable backsheet.

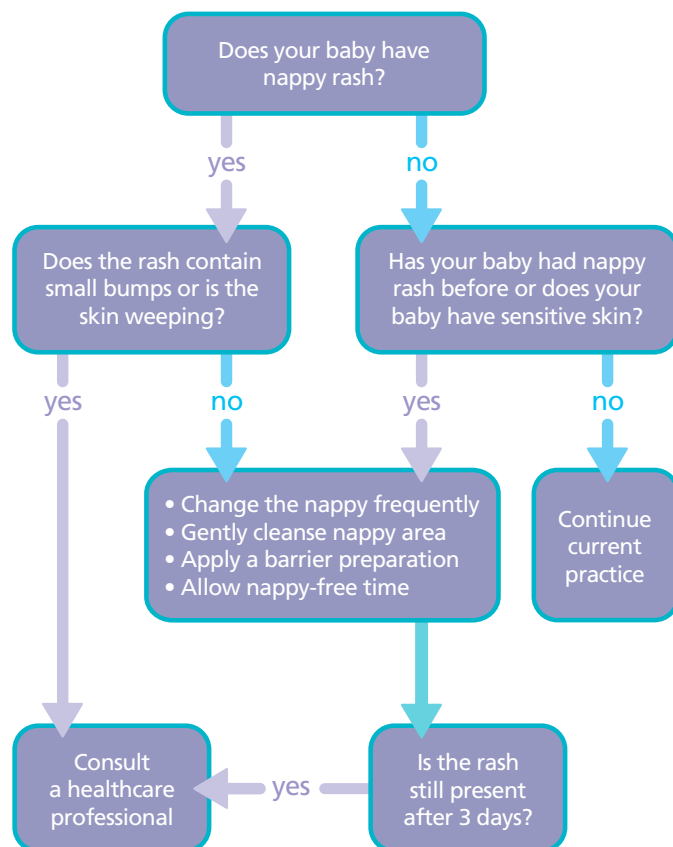
Frequent nappy changes: Change the nappy immediately after a bowel motion or at the first sign of wetness. As a guide, try to change disposable nappies every 3–4 hours during the day and cloth nappies every 2 hours. It is usually not necessary to wake a sleeping baby to change nappies.

Cleansing: Scrubbing and excessive cleansing can irritate the skin and make the rash worse. Water alone or with a soap-free cleanser is sufficient to clean the nappy area. Baby wipes should only be used on healthy-appearing skin. Your doctor, child health nurse or pharmacist can help you choose an appropriate cleanser.

Barrier creams or ointments: A barrier preparation may be applied at each nappy change to prevent or treat nappy rash. The preparation should not contain preservatives, essential oils, herbals, aloe or fragrances. Preparations containing hydrocortisone, antiseptics or antifungal agents should only be used on the advice of a healthcare professional. Your doctor, child health nurse or pharmacist can help you choose an appropriate barrier preparation.

Give this approach a fair shot. It may take a few days for the rash to disappear. If you don't notice any improvement after 3 days, then consult a healthcare professional before trying something else.

FORMULA FOR MANAGING NAPPY RASH



REMEMBER

Nappy rash commonly affects children during nappy-wearing years.

Most cases of nappy rash last 2–3 days.

Prevention and treatment of nappy rash include frequent changes, gentle cleansing and the use of a barrier preparation.

Vigorous scrubbing of the nappy area should be avoided.

Products (e.g. baby wipes, barrier preparations) used on the nappy area should not contain soap, alcohol, preservatives, herbals, essential oils, aloe or perfumes; your doctor, child health nurse or pharmacist can help you choose appropriate products.

Changing treatment too frequently can aggravate nappy rash; each product should be given at least 3 days to work before trying something else.

If the nappy rash persists, see a healthcare professional.