

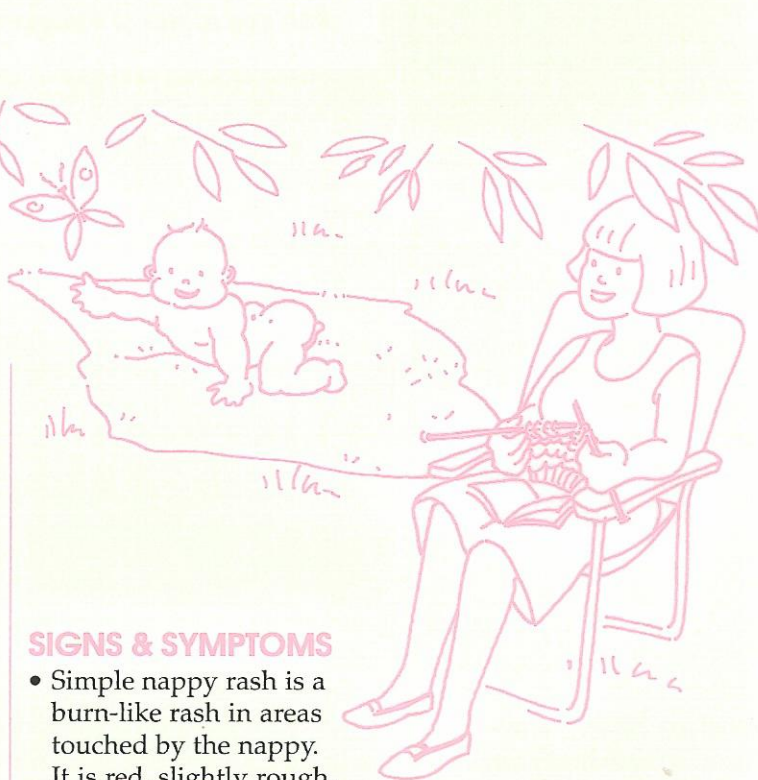
# NAPPY RASH

Babies' skin is much softer and thinner than ours so it is more easily irritated. Some babies have more sensitive skin that can quickly become red and irritated when left wet. Some babies get nappy rash often while others never do. For baby's comfort, it is better to prevent nappy rash rather than just to treat it when it occurs.

## CAUSES

Baby's skin may be sore from the wet nappy and irritated by:

- bowel motions – especially loose motions which may be caused by certain foods, medicines or when teething
- urine – especially when nappy is left on too long or when covered by plastic pants (plastic pants make nappy rash more likely by keeping baby's skin warm, wet and airless)
- chemicals – in nappy change creams, wipes (ask your pharmacist) or in nappies which haven't been fully rinsed (e.g. detergents, bleach, water softener, fabric softener, nappy rinse).



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Simple nappy rash is a burn-like rash in areas touched by the nappy. It is red, slightly rough, and scaly.
- If the rash doesn't clear, the skin may become infected, usually with thrush (candida). This causes a brighter red, shiny rash with sharply outlined patches, often with smaller spots out of the main area. Unlike a simple nappy rash, the creases of the skin may also be red.

## IMPORTANT

See your doctor if:

- the rash spreads outside the nappy area
- the rash is worse after 2 days of treatment (see over)
- baby also has a fever, is irritable, is not eating well or seems ill.

## SELF CARE

- Leave the nappy off as often as possible so bottom is exposed to the air. Take care if baby is outdoors as skin that hasn't been in the sun is sensitive and burns very easily.
- Change a wet or dirty nappy straight away.
- Try to remove new foods or chemicals which may be causing the rash.
- Use a flannel outer nappy instead of plastic pants.
- Double rinse nappies after washing.
- Hang nappies in the sun then put in the drier for several minutes when almost dry to soften them.
- Keep nappies loosely fastened, especially at night to allow air to flow around the bottom.
- Nappy rash can occur with cloth or with disposable nappies. If using disposable nappies, pick the most absorbent type. Use a one-way nappy liner next to baby's skin with cloth nappies.

### Treating Nappy Rash

- Clean bottom at each nappy change with sorbolene cream mixed with water (ask your pharmacist). Avoid soap, especially perfumed soap.
- Some soap substitutes, also help to settle skin irritation in the nappy area (ask your pharmacist).
- Use oilated oatmeal or a handful of oats (put into foot of an old stocking) in baby's bath. Squeeze the oatmilk onto the rash to calm it.

## PREVENTING NAPPY RASH

- Change wet or dirty nappies straight away.
  - Wash baby's bottom each nappy change with wet cotton balls (soft white toilet paper if baby's skin is less sensitive) using sorbolene cream or unscented soap when necessary.
  - Pat dry and leave uncovered until completely dry.
  - Apply a protective cream.
  - Rinse wet or dirty nappies well before placing in nappy soaking solution (always wear rubber gloves) or wash immediately with pure soap.
  - Rinse nappies twice to remove soap and chemicals. Add one cupful of vinegar to the rinsing water.
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- Hydrocortisone cream or ointment may be used for a **short** time to treat severe rash (ask your pharmacist).
  - Hydrocortisone products will not stop nappy rash coming back. Find out what causes the rash and follow the preventing nappy rash section above.
  - If rash is infected you will need a different cream or ointment. Ask your doctor or pharmacist.
  - Apply a healing protective cream (e.g. zinc and castor oil) after washing bottom at each nappy change.

### Recommended Reading:

LEACH P  
*Baby and Child*  
Penguin, 1994

WILTON L  
*Your Baby - The First 12 Months*  
Gore & Osment, 1994

Your Self Care pharmacist

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### Contact:

Your doctor (listed under Medical Practitioners in the yellow pages of the phone book).

Your local Baby, Child or Infant Health Centre (listed in the white pages of the phone book).

Your Self Care pharmacist  
To find:

ACT	(02)	6281 1366
NSW	(02)	9437 5941
QLD	(07)	3844 4900
SA	(08)	8272 1211
TAS	(03)	6231 2636
VIC	(03)	9903 9600
WA	(08)	9388 2886



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