

Newborn Skin Care

McKenzie Pediatrics (May 2000)

Cleaning The Newborn's Skin:

- Avoid soaps with abrasives, deodorants, antibacterial agents, or fragrance/perfumes
- Bathing frequency can be daily, or every 2-3 days, depending on the parent's wishes
- Avoid skin lotions, oils, or creams unless your baby's skin becomes very dried out after bathing

Diaper Area Skin Care:

- Use alcohol-free & perfume-free baby wipes for diaper changes, or use a warm-water washcloth
- Zinc oxide diaper ointments (Desitin, Balmex) are great **preventions** for diaper rash, but often worsen an existing rash. If your baby's diaper area skin frequently becomes red & irritated, consider using a zinc oxide cream perhaps every other diaper change
- A rash with lots of little **angry-red dots** is likely a **yeast infection**, and may sting or burn...call your doctor's office for advice on treating this condition
- Change your baby's diaper as frequently as possible, **8 or more times per day**
- Allow a baby's bottom to air-dry completely before replacing the diaper
- For diaper rashes, discontinue diaper ointments and baby wipes, change the diaper every 1-2 hours, soak skin in skim milk several times a day, and use Eucerin Cream or petroleum jelly on red areas between changes. If the redness is not improving within several days, call your doctor's office for advice

Cradle Cap (Seborrhea):

- A **normal** scalp skin condition occurring in many infants, especially between 1-6 months of age...may last as long as 18 months. It is **not** a reflection of poor hygiene, or a vitamin deficiency!
- Generally no treatment needed as usually resolves with time. Cosmetic improvement can be achieved by rubbing mineral or olive oil into scalp to loosen the scales, then brushing them away with a soft baby brush. Do not use harsh soaps to try and scrub away...this will only make it worse!
- If you are impatient, you may also try medicated shampoos such as Selsun Blue, Danex, Sebulex, or Neutrogena T/Sal, but be *very* careful to avoid getting these in your baby's eyes!

Sunscreen:

- **Can** be used in infants under age 6 months: be sure it's PABA-free, and SPF 15 is fine
- Apply 15-30 minutes before going outside for maximal protection
- Avoid direct sun exposure during the peak hours of 10am to 3pm
- Infants should wear a cotton shirt and cotton hat while in sunlight

Insect Repellants:

- May be used in infants, but **be sure the amount of DEET does not exceed 10%**, and do not apply it more than once per day. Do not use insect repellants on the face and hands, and not near any cuts or sores. Once inside, wash off with soap & water

Newborn Acne:

- Occurs in 1 out of 3 infants, usually beginning around 1 month, & lasting 4-6 months
- No treatment is necessary, but **baby oils and lotions will make it worse**
- Does not indicate a higher risk for acne as a teenager!