

Wellness Articles

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You have a newborn! Tips on taking care of your baby's skin

It's very common for newborns to have rashes or other skin problems. Some of them have long names that are hard to say and sound scary. But most will go away on their own in a few days or weeks. Here's a short guide to your baby's skin.

- **Babe acne:** Babies often get pimples on their cheeks, noses, and foreheads. This baby acne may show up during the first few weeks and usually clears up on its own in a few months.
- **Little white spots:** Tiny white spots often appear on a newborn's face during the first week. The spots are called milia ("MIL-ee-uh"). Sometimes white spots appear on the gums and the roof of the mouth (palate), where they are called Epstein pearls. The white spots go away by themselves in a few weeks and aren't harmful.
- **Red blotches:** During the first day or two of life, many babies get harmless red blotches with tiny bumps that sometimes contain pus. This is called erythema toxicum ("air-uh-THEE-mah TOK-sik-um"). The blotchy areas may come and go, and they will usually go away on their own within a week.
- **Mottling:** When cold, your newborn may get a blotchy, lacy rash (mottling) on their limbs and torso. Remove your baby from the cold, and the rash will usually go away. Mottling usually doesn't occur past six months of age.
- **Heat rash:** Babies can get heat rash, sometimes called prickly heat, when they are dressed too warmly or when the weather is hot. This is a red or pink rash usually found on the body areas covered by clothing. It often itches and makes your baby uncomfortable. Doctors call this rash miliaria ("mil-ee-AIR-ee-uh"). To help the rash go away, remove your baby from the warm setting. Dress your child in light, loose clothing and give them a cool bath.
- **Diaper rash:** Diaper rash is red and sore skin on a baby's bottom or genitals. It is caused by wearing a wet diaper for a long time. Urine and stool can irritate the skin. Sometimes an infection from bacteria or yeast can cause a diaper rash. If your baby has diaper rash, keep them as dry as possible.
- **A rash from drooling.** Many babies have a rash off and on around their mouth or on their chin. It's caused by drooling and spitting up. Clean your baby's face often, especially after they eat or spit up.

- **Tiny red dots:** Your newborn's skin may have tiny red dots called petechiae (say "puh-TEE-kee-eye"). These are specks of blood that have leaked into the skin. They are caused by the trauma of being squeezed through the birth canal. They will disappear within the first week or two.
- **A scaly rash on their scalp:** This scaly or crusty skin on top of a baby's head is a normal buildup of sticky skin oils, scales, and dead skin cells. Unlike some other rashes, cradle cap can be treated at home with shampoo or mineral oil. Cradle cap usually goes away by the time your baby is one year old.

For more information on caring for your newborn, call Health Link at 811 to speak with a Registered nurse, or talk with your family doctor.