

Rashes



Call the doctor if your child:

- If the rash does not look better in 3 days.
- Red spots spread outside of the diaper area.

Diaper Rash:

If you see red spots or raw skin on your baby's bottom or thighs (the area covered by diaper), it is probably diaper rash. This rash usually occurs when a wet diaper irritates your baby's skin. Many infants get diaper rash and this is something you can treat at home. Some things to keep in mind if your foster baby has diaper rash:

- Urine in a diaper is very irritating to a baby's skin and can make the diaper rash worse.
- It is important to change his or her diaper as soon as it gets wet.
- Clean your baby's bottom with warm water at each time you change the diaper. Do not use baby wipes. These can further irritate your baby's skin. Leaving the diaper off and "air-drying" can be helpful.
- Make sure your baby's bottom is completely dry before putting on a clean diaper. If possible, allow your baby to be diaper-free for 15 minutes.
- You can also use a diaper rash cream to form a barrier between your baby's skin and wetness. Some examples are zinc oxide, Desitin®, or A+D® ointment. Make sure your baby's skin is dry before you apply the cream.

The Facts:

Most rashes in infants and children aren't serious, but it can be difficult for doctors to figure out what is causing a rash. Many rashes will go away on their own without any treatment. Some rashes are more serious and need to be treated by a doctor. This section will discuss diaper rash, sunburn, bug bite and stings, tick bites and allergic rashes.

Sunburn:

It is important to protect your foster child's skin from sun exposure. A sunburn is an actual burn to the skin that is caused by the sun. With sunburn, your child's skin will turn pink or red, and may even develop blisters. Sunburns not only hurt, they can cause dehydration and fever as well. Sunburns during childhood can lead to skin cancer later in life.

Babies under 6 months of age need extra protection from the sun because their skin is thinner and burns more easily. Keep them in the shade wearing a hat and lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs. Use sunscreen on the face and backs of the hands if shade is not available.

Babies and children older than 6 months should wear sunscreen everywhere except around the eyes. If your child rubs sunscreen into her eyes, wipe her eyes and hands clean with a damp cloth.

What can I do to care for a child with a sunburn?

- Give your child plenty of liquids to drink.
- Put a cool, wet cloth on the sunburn.
- Apply aloe vera gel to the area.
- Dress your child in soft clothing.
- If your child has blisters, do not try to pop them. If the blisters break on their own, wash the area with a gentle soap and water, and air dry.

Call a doctor if:

- Your child has a fever in addition to sunburn.

Sunburn Prevention

- Always use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher.
- Choose a water-resistant or waterproof sunscreen. Sunscreens that are "waterproof" should be reapplied every two hours, especially if your child is playing in the water.
- To put on sunscreen, cover all exposed areas and rub it in well. Put sunscreen on at least 30 minutes before going outside so there is time for it to sink in. Reapply every two hours or after swimming or sweating.
- Apply sunscreen even on cloudy days because it is possible to get sunburn when it is cloudy.
- Limit sun exposure between 10am and 4pm, when sunlight is strongest.
- Be careful when using sunscreen for the first time in case the child has an allergic reaction. If sunscreen irritates your child's skin, try a different brand.
- Model good behavior by putting sunscreen on yourself too!