DIAPER RASHES

Diaper rashes in children are very common and can be frustrating to parents and children alike. The skin in this area can be very sensitive and is exposed to many irritants (urine, stool, moisture, wipes). Learning some distinguishing factors between the most common forms of diaper rash can help parents know what creams and/or therapies may work best.

DIAPER RASH PREVENTION:

- **Change the baby’s diaper frequently.** Change diapers soiled with stool as soon as possible. Wet diapers should be changed if soaked or every 2-4 hours during the day.
- **Be careful with your wipes.** Many baby wipes have soaps and fragrances that can be irritating to the skin, especially during the first few weeks of life. Use hypoallergenic/fragrance-free wipes. If your baby already has a rash or is a newborn, consider using baby washcloths. These can be easily made ahead of time by putting them in an old wipe container and pouring a mixture of roughly 2 cups water with 1 tablespoon baby oil over a full container of cloth wipes.
- **When possible, allow the baby’s bottom to be open to air.** This will help “dry out” the rash by reducing moisture. When wearing a diaper or plastic pants, loosen the legs so that air can circulate to the skin or allow the baby to be naked from the waist down (you may want the baby on a waterproof pad).

COMMON TYPES OF DIAPER RASHES include contact rash, yeast rash, and bacterial rash. Home treatments for each:

- **Contact Rash:** These are due to skin exposure to irritants such as urine, stool, brand of diaper, or wipes. This rash usually looks like a general pink-to-red irritation. Use the prevention tips above in addition to the following:
  - After wiping, pat the area dry with a dry cloth.
  - Let the child sit in a shallow bath with baking soda sprinkled in the water.
  - To help seal the skin and promote healing, use a form of barrier diaper cream. There are many good ones such as Desitin, Boudreaux’s Butt Paste, Aveeno, Dr. Smith’s, etc. A great mixture, especially for rashes caused by diarrhea, is to mix Aquaphor ointment and Maalox liquid antacid to make a thick paste and to use this as the diaper cream as needed.
• **Yeast Rash:** Skin has many forms of yeast that normally live on it. In warm moist areas, such as the diaper area, this yeast can overgrow and cause a rash, especially if there is some other predisposing factor, such as recent antibiotic use or illness. A yeast rash is typically worse in the skin folds, bright red with jagged borders, and usually has bright red dots at the edges. Use the prevention tips above plus some over the counter clotrimazole cream (e.g. Lotrimin, Mycelex) 3-4 times a day.

• **Bacterial Rash:** This rash is usually bright red, often moist and “weepy” or “oozing”, and extremely painful. If you suspect this type of rash, make an appointment with your child’s doctor for evaluation, as it may require testing and possibly oral antibiotics.

**Call our office during office hours if:**
- The rash is not improving after 3-4 days of above treatment.
- There is one area that seems swollen, red, and/or hot.
- The pain from the rash seems severe.

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