

## How to clean baby after diaper change



### **Start with clean hands and supplies**

Before you begin, wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not immediately available, then gather everything you need: a clean diaper, fresh wipes or cotton and water, diaper cream if it is being used, and a safe place to place the baby. Keeping supplies within reach reduces the chance of leaving the baby unattended.

The process is simpler when you prepare the area first. If the diapering surface gets stool or urine on it, clean and disinfect it according to the product instructions or your home hygiene routine.

### **Clean gently from front to back**

Open the dirty diaper and use the front portion to remove most of the mess before using wipes. Then clean the skin with a fresh wipe, moving from front to back. This is especially important for girls because it helps avoid moving stool toward the urethra.

Use as many wipes as needed, but avoid vigorous rubbing. The goal is to remove residue, not to scrub the skin. A slow, gentle motion is usually enough for

healthy skin and is often better tolerated when the area is already irritated.

### **Use water when the skin is very sensitive**

If the diaper area is inflamed, raw, or repeatedly irritated, plain lukewarm water can be a good option for cleaning. A soft cloth or cotton can be used instead of wipes if the skin seems to sting or if wiping causes visible discomfort.

Harsh soap is usually unnecessary for routine diaper-area cleaning and may worsen dryness or irritation. If soap is used at all, it should be mild and used sparingly, with thorough rinsing. The emphasis is on keeping the area clean without stripping the skin barrier.

### **Dry the area well before putting on a new diaper**

After cleaning, pat the skin dry rather than rubbing it. Moisture trapped under a diaper can contribute to irritation because the diaper area is warm, occluded, and exposed to frequent contact with urine and stool.

Letting the area air-dry briefly can help if the baby is calm and safely positioned. Once the skin is dry, apply a clean diaper loosely enough to avoid unnecessary friction but snug enough to prevent leaks.

### **Protect the skin with barrier ointment when needed**

If a baby has frequent diaper rash or the skin looks red and exposed to moisture, a barrier ointment may help protect the skin. Common barrier ingredients include petrolatum or zinc oxide, which create a physical layer between the skin and moisture.

Barrier products are not a substitute for cleaning, but they can be helpful when applied to clean, dry skin. If the diaper area is becoming red despite careful hygiene, that is a good reason to discuss the pattern with a pediatric clinician rather than simply adding more products.

### **Know when cleaning should be more cautious**

Some diaper rashes are simple irritation, but others need medical attention. If the rash is severe, spreading, blistering, or associated with fever, poor feeding, bleeding, or drainage, contact a healthcare professional. Persistent rash can reflect infection, contact dermatitis, or another condition that needs evaluation.

Also seek advice if your baby seems very uncomfortable with diaper changes, if the skin repeatedly breaks down, or if home care is not improving things. Early guidance can prevent a minor skin problem from becoming a more significant one.