

Cradle Cap

Your child has been diagnosed or suspected to have Cradle Cap and may have any of the following symptoms:

- Yellow scales and crusts attached to the scalp
- Scales can be greasy or dry
- Not itchy or painful
- Starts in the first 2 to 6 weeks of life

Causes

- Cradle cap is a common skin condition of newborns.
- It's caused by overactive oil glands in the scalp.
- It's harmless and will eventually go away on its own.
- Cradle cap is not contagious.

Care & Treatment

- Shampoo Daily- Wash the hair with an anti-dandruff shampoo (OTC) twice a week.
- Note: the PDR hasn't approved daily use of anti-dandruff shampoo until after 2 years old, but twice a week is fine. On other days, wash the hair with a baby shampoo.
- Scalp Massage while Shampooing Hair - While the hair is lathered, massage the scalp with a soft brush or a washcloth for 5 minutes.
- Baby Oil for Thick Crusts or Scales - If the scalp has thick crusts or scales, put some baby oil on the scalp 15 minutes before shampooing to soften the crusts.
- Cradle cap lotions for loosening up the scales are also available without a prescription. Apply the lotion 15 minutes before shampooing.
- Steroid Cream for Red or Irritated Scalp- If the rash on the scalp is red and irritated, apply 1% hydrocortisone cream (OTC) once a day - Do this for 7 days or less.
- Anti-Yeast Cream for Rash behind Ears- If the rash behind the ears is raw and painful, apply clotrimazole 1% cream (such as Lotrimin AF) (OTC) 2 times a day.

What to Expect

- Cradle cap will eventually go away on its own between 6 and 12 months of age. Usually it doesn't cause any symptoms (such as pain or itching).
- Treatment is optional and mainly done for cosmetic reasons.
- Shampoos, lotions and brushing will reduce the thickness of the scales and usually make them go away sooner.

When to Call for

Continue Self-Care at Home

- Mild Cradle Cap

Call Office to be Seen Within 24 Hours

- Raw rash behind the ears
- Rash spreads beyond the scalp
- Cradle cap bleeds
- Pus or discharge occurs in cradle cap
- Cradle cap gets worse with treatment
- Cradle cap lasts longer than 12 months
- All higher-acuity triage questions were negative

Call Office to be Seen Urgently

- Newborn (< 1 mo) with tiny water blisters or pimples in a cluster