



Baby Skin Care

Virtual Parenting Hub - Online advice, support, and guidance empowering parents to work through challenges and find solutions.



Baby Skin Care

We all know the saying “as soft as babies’ skin”, the reality is babies have thinner and more sensitive skin compared to adults. Babies can be born with a thick white coating called vernix, this is like a moisturising cream for your baby and will absorb into their skin. There is no need to wash it off after birth. The skin is a barrier, so looking after your babies’ skin with appropriate cleansing, moisturising and sun protection will help prevent unwanted problems.

Bathing your Baby

- You do not need to bath your baby every day, every 2 or 3 days is suitable.
- Make your babies bath deep and warm 37°C and you will find that they will stretch out and enjoy it.
- You do not need to use a lot of products on your babies' skin, warm water, cold pressed olive oil, coconut oil, apricot kernel oil and a barrier cream for nappy rash.
- Do not use soaps or powders as these products will make your babies skin dry and strip away the natural oils.



Moisturising your baby

- Babies skin can become dry, so it is important to moisturise their skin daily.
- Use oils including cold pressed oil olive, coconut or apricot kernel.
- You can directly apply the oil onto the skin, avoiding areas like around the eyes, face and mouth.
- You can also add some oil to the bath.
- If you are using other baby products, make sure they are PH neutral.



Cord Care

- The cord needs to be kept clean and dry.
- There are no products that need to be applied to the cord.
- Sometimes the cord area may look moist or have a smell as it is breaking down to separate.
- The cord stump is like a scab, so sometimes at separation there might be a small amount of blood.
- Bathing your baby and then pat drying the cord area is all you need to do.
- Expose the cord area to air as much as possible and fold the nappy down under the cord area.
- The cord usually separates 5-10 days post birth.
- If there are any signs of infection, including a red inflamed abdominal area, see your Doctor.



Sun protection

- Babies skin is sensitive and can be damaged in the sun and UV light.
- Do not leave your baby in direct sunlight.
- You can start using a sunscreen on your baby from 6 months of age, it is not recommended before this.
- When outdoors dress you baby in light clothing, hats and shades on prams.
- When the UV index reaches 3 a broad range 30+ sunscreen should be used to exposed skin areas.
- Use a baby, sensitive skin sunscreen or a mineral zinc oxide-based sunscreen.
- Stop using the sunscreen if it causes a reaction.
- Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going outside and re apply every 2 hours.





Common Birth Marks

There are different types of birth marks which are common, most birth marks fade or go away over time and there is nothing you need to do. If a birth mark does not go away, laser treatment can be an option, which you could speak to your GP about.

Haemangioma

- Haemangiomas are common and are sometimes called strawberry birth marks because of their bright red colour.
- They can appear anywhere over the body and appear soon after birth.
- Haemangiomas can be flat or raised and are caused by an overgrowth of blood vessel cells.
- Haemangiomas grow bigger and then they start to shrink usually after one year. By ten years of age, they usually have disappeared.
- If the haemangioma is large, over eyes, nose, mouth, bottom, or genitals, it may need to be treated to prevent an ulcer, infection, or scarring.



Treatment

- Show your GP.
- No treatment is needed for most haemangiomas.
- If there is bleeding, apply firm pressure for 10 minutes or until the bleeding stops. Go to your GP or emergency department if you cannot stop the bleeding.
- Laser treatment may be used for some haemangiomas.
- Beta blocker medication or gel may be used. A Paediatric Dermatologist will supervise these treatments.
- In a few cases surgery will be required in the first year of life.



Mongolian spots

- They are blue in colour, flat and often cover the bottom and lower back.
- They are present on your baby at birth.
- They can be big or small and do not cause any problems.
- They will fade over time, usually over 2 years.
- They are caused by a build-up of pigment cells.
- They are more common in darker skinned people but can occur in lighter skinned people too.



Café-au-lait macules

- These are common light brown flat marks which can appear anywhere on the skin.
- Some children may have more than one.
- If your child has many of these birth marks, see your GP.



Salmon patches or Stork marks

- These birth marks are pale pink, flat and present at birth.
- They can be over the forehead, bridge of nose, eye lids or nape of neck.
- They are common and fade over time, leaving no marks by 3 years.
- The stork mark on the nape of the neck may stay present into adult life.



Eczema

Eczema usually starts appearing on your child's skin before one year of age. Eczema is a common skin condition, with the cause unknown and no real cure. It is known that Eczema can run in families. Most children will grow out of eczema by their teenage years.

Eczema

- You should see your GP if you think your baby has eczema for the first time.
- Babies with eczema can have red dry itchy patches on their scalp, body, arms, and legs.
- In toddlers the red dry itchy patches can be in the skin folds, knees, elbows, wrists, ankles.
- Eczema can weep, bleed or crack when scratched.
- Bacterial infections can develop when the skin is broken, typically looking weepy, crusted and is painful.
- Eczema can come and go, flare up at times but when treated properly leaves no scarring.
- It is important to treat the eczema as soon as it flares up.
- It is important to remove eczema scabs so the treatment can get to the skin.



Eczema triggers

- Being over heated with clothes or heating in the home
- Dry skin
- Soaps, detergents, bubble bath, chemicals
- Fabrics that itch the skin including wool, acrylic clothing, and bedding
- Dummies or dribbling around the mouth
- Food allergies or intolerances including dairy
- Pollens, dust mites, animal fur
- Toothpaste, use one that is sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS) free

Treatment

- If you think that your child's eczema is caused by a food allergy, see your GP to discuss allergy testing.
- Dress your child in cotton underwear and clothing.
- Keep your child cool, do not dress them in too many layers.
- Give your child short baths or showers, only once per day as water can dry the skin.
- Avoid using soaps, powders, bubble bath or any products with preservatives, anti-septics and SLS.
- Add non-perfumed oils to your child's bath.
- Moisturise your child's skin twice per day with a natural, non-perfumed, thick cream. Thick creams are better than lotions.
- Use a cortisone cream prescribed by your GP for break outs. Use as directed.
- Cortisone is a natural hormone produced in the body and the cream is effective and safe to use on your child, as directed by your GP.
- Keep your child's nails short and clean to help prevent infection when scratching.
- Try cotton mittens on hands for overnight.



How to help control the itching

- Apply a soft cool towel to the area for immediate relief for 5-10 minutes, remove towel and apply a thick layer of moisturizing cream.
- Apply wet dressings at bedtime and cease using them when eczema has cleared up. Usually 3-5 days.
- Use a wet T shirt or singlet underneath a layer of cotton clothing throughout the day. You can repeat this during the day until the itch and redness subside.
- Distract your child when they are scratching.

Wet dressings

- Wet dressings are best applied to the skin overnight but can be used during the day if the eczema is severe.
- Wet dressings will dry after a few hours, take them off as they will irritate the skin when dry, except overnight, leave on until your child wakes.
- The crepe bandages can be re used and washed in the washing machine but throw out the disposable clothes.
- Soak disposable cloths (purchased from a pharmacy) in a bowl of lukewarm water with a bath oil.
- Apply the cortisone cream to all affected areas. Then apply a thick moisturising cream over the top of the cortisone cream
- Wrap the wet towels around the eczema areas thickly.
- Then wrap the crepe bandages around the wet towels firmly but not too tight.
- You can use a scarf or a bandana for around the neck but take them off at bedtime.
- You can use a wet T shirt or singlet for the trunk, then a dry T shirt over the top.

