



Everything You Need to Know About Cradle Cap on Babies

If you are the parent or caretaker of an infant, you should know about cradle cap. Wait- don't worry; cradle cap is not contagious or medically dangerous, unless you allow it to become infected. In fact, most cases of cradle cap clear up on their own by the time the child turns one year old. So, what exactly is cradle cap and what do you need to know?

What is Cradle Cap?

Infant seborrheic dermatitis, otherwise known as cradle cap, is likened to infant dandruff. The name refers to the most common region of the body that is affected by this skin condition: the area where you would wear a cap. Cradle cap manifests in scaly patches of flaky skin on the baby's scalp, typically affecting children from a few weeks old up to a year. Cradle cap is not a serious condition, but it can be unsightly and cause alarm among parents. It is not uncommon for infants to also have cradle cap in other areas of their body, like the diapering region, neck, face, and torso. It is important to know that cradle cap is not a sign of poor hygiene! It is a common occurrence that has more to do with hormones than habits.

Treatment for cradle cap is fairly-simple and can help the condition clear up a bit quicker. It is not suggested that you pick, rub, or allow the skin to become infected- which means keeping your child from scratching or digging at the affected areas. If you do nothing else, prevent the child from irritating the skin and it should clear up on its own over time.



What are Common Symptoms?

Symptoms of cradle cap include the flaking skin on the top and sides of the baby's head, as well as some darkening 'scales' that may arouse concern, but don't be alarmed. Your baby may also develop an oiliness around the scalp area, despite bathing or shampooing. In other cases, the scalp may simply appear red or inflamed. It is not known for sure, but cradle cap is believed by some to not be itchy, however children should still be prevented from digging or scratching the scalp as infection could infrequently occur. Also, there is a slim possibility of the baby losing hair in the afflicted spots, but it should grow back in when they outgrow cradle cap.

Wondering if your baby has cradle cap? Look closely at other parts of their body beyond their head, including:

- Their face.
- Behind and around their ears.
- Under the arms; armpits.
- In the diapering region and butt.

It is quite possible that if you suspect your child has cradle cap, they may also have patches in multiple spots of the body. If you believe your baby is experiencing discomfort, speak to your physician for prompt care and attention.



What Causes Cradle Cap?

So, what are the causes of cradle cap? Typically, the answer is hormones. Hormones from the mother can be passed to the baby before birth or during breastfeeding. Residual hormones from pregnancy can cause your child to have cradle cap. This condition has nothing to do with improper hygiene or too few baths. not the case. Hormones present in the baby's body cause sebaceous glands to produce more oil, which causes the skin to become red, scaly, or flaky.

Cradle cap is harmless and not contagious- you can expect it to be gone usually by your child's first birthday. Think about it in terms of a normal part of adjusting to life outside the womb; in fact, around half of all babies born have some kind of cradle cap outbreak during their first year. Typically, there are no complications with his harmless condition, however an infection could possibly occur. This usually is a result of picking, dirty fingernails, or bedding; keep hands away from the afflicted area as much as possible and keep the baby's linens, clothing, and belongings clean.

Is it Painful for my Baby?

Concerned about your baby's comfort? Cradle cap doesn't hurt. Again, it is not contagious so rest assured, a child with cradle cap won't cause a pandemic. If you think of cradle cap as a form of simple dandruff, it is easier to put it in perspective as far as the health risks and repercussions are concerned. Severe or extreme cases of cradle cap may, however, cause some discomfort, including inflammation of the afflicted area and infection. If your baby's skin seems irritated or infected, see your child's provider right away. Again, don't worry about spreading cradle cap through toys, bedding, surfaces, or exposure to others.

What Can I do to Prevent it, or Treat it?

When it comes to preventing cradle cap, there really is very little that you can do. While you may not be able to completely prevent cradle cap outbreaks, you may be able to alleviate and reduce the symptoms of this condition. Remember that cradle cap is worse when there is sweat or oils present, so keep your baby cool and comfy. Skip the hat- unless weather conditions warrant one- and keep them cool and appropriately dressed when indoors or during travel.

So, what else can you do to lessen the symptoms of cradle cap? Remember that the symptoms of cradle cap can manifest quite differently from child to child; that is, some kids may have dry, flaking skin while others simply have reddening on their torso or trunk region. Your physician will suggest treatment, if warranted, and this protocol will be based on your child's age, general health, and symptoms. You should be aware that even with treatment, cradle cap can come and go throughout the first year of life, and sometimes slightly beyond.

Here are some things that you can do to lessen and alleviate cradle cap symptoms:

- Massage the scalp with baby oil or petroleum jelly.
- Follow up by washing the baby's hair to remove the scaly skin.
- Ask your provider for special shampoo that is designed to moisturize and treat the scalp.
- Shampoo the baby's head more often to reduce excess oils.
- Ask your provider about corticosteroid cream or lotion for treating and clearing cradle cap, if the condition is severe.
- Use a soft bristled brush that is specially designed to gently exfoliate the scaly skin from the baby's scalp.

Cradle cap usually bothers the parents more than the child. Don't be tempted into thinking that rigorous bathing will prevent and resolve this condition. In fact, too much bathing can dry out the skin, making this condition worse. No one knows your baby as well as you do- assess their scalp or afflicted areas to determine if you should seek the advice of a professional. Stick to bathing babies no more than once a day and do not, repeat, do not pick or scratch at the cradle cap skin. You can make the region sore and make it prone to infection.

It merits a consultation with your child's pediatrician or provider if you have concerns or you start to notice some redness or swelling. After all, this may provide the peace of mind that parents need. During the interim, keep the child's baths relatively short, ten minutes or less, and only once per day. Try to heat the water to around the same temperature as your baby, 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The bath is the ideal time and place to use a soft bristled brush to gently exfoliate the scalp, but never pick or dig at the flaking skin or scales; it can hurt the child.



Is the air in your home too dry? Have you considered using a humidifier? A humidifier can provide the moisture that is lacking in your home environment and help prevent the symptoms of cradle cap by maintaining some humidity in the air. A humidifier is inexpensive and various models are found widely in-store and online. Use baby oil or lotion to keep the baby's skin moisturized, as well.

Also, keep an eye on what products you use on and around your baby. Watch out for harsh chemicals in many health and beauty products that could make your child's skin worse; instead, look for mild, non-fragranced products that are designed for infants' delicate skin. Avoid using adult

products, often filled with fragrances, additives, and chemicals, on your child's skin, especially if they struggle with symptoms of flaking skin and cradle cap. These products can irritate a baby's skin, causing irritation and discomfort.

Want some more suggestions to help fight cradle cap? If you are a parent, you need the revolutionary scalp massaging brush proven effective in the fight against cradle cap. This brush is soft, safe, and soothing, removes flaking skin and the crust typically associated with this condition.

This product, the Bean-B-Clean, provides an easy way to curb the symptoms of cradle cap in a comforting way for your child. Make cradle cap less of a concern with this safe and simple product.