

Happy & Healthy Pediatrics

Pediatric, Adolescent, & Breastfeeding Medicine



Skin Care and Hygiene

These products are recommended for all people-from newborn until adulthood. These products are safe and not too harsh even for newborn skin, even though they are not marketed for children. The products that are marketed for children often have fragrance and chemicals in them that promote rashes and dry skin.

- Bathing: Children should be bathed very infrequently. Every 2-3 days is more than enough. If you want to bathe them more often, only use soap every 2-3 days. With newborns you use a warm wet washcloth with no soap at all until the umbilical cord falls off. The water should always be lukewarm and never hot. Never use bubble baths as they are guaranteed to cause dry skin. Adding some olive or coconut oil to water, a small splash, can also help moisturize the skin well.
- Soap: The best soap to use is a **bar of white Dove soap**. Soap should always be used sparingly every 2-3 days. If you see your child's skin is still getting dry, then only use soap on the "gross parts"-tushie, genitalia, face, underarms, feet, etc. and use no soap on the arms, legs, back, abdomen and chest. This may be especially true in the winter when our skin tends to be the driest. You should apply the soap at the end of the bath, rinse the child, and then immediately get them out of the soapy water.

- Shampoo: The best shampoo to use is adult **Head and Shoulders-Classic Clean**. All newborns and infants get cradle cap which is an awful rash that starts on the scalp and spreads onto the surrounding skin. Starting from the newborn period, we recommend using Head and Shoulders every 2-3 days to wash the scalp and surrounding skin. **Lather the scalp and head, the forehead into the eyebrows, the cheeks, front and back of ears, back of neck-basically, all of the skin surrounding the hair line.** Use a wet paper towel to wipe the shampoo off of the forehead and then wash the rest off in the bath. If you got it into the child's eyes, it would be mildly irritating, but not harmful. Just rinse with extra water.



- Moisturize: **Eucerin Original Crème** is an excellent product to moisturize the body with. It can be used all over the body safely. It is very thick, which is why it works well. You can apply it multiple times/day. Make sure you don't buy the lotion which comes in a pump. You want the crème which comes in a tub or tube. **Aquaphor** is also a great product for the face, neck and creases of the skin. It is greasy so it repels the constant moisture on the face and neck, and it repels friction in the creases of the skin. Small children often get rashes on the face around the mouth and in the neck (or their lack of) due to drool and milk that is in constant contact with the skin. Aquaphor is perfect for those areas, and it is safe to put around the mouth. You should especially apply these creams after the bath when the skin is still slightly moist (ideally within 3 minutes of coming out of the bath). Blot the skin dry, apply the crème, and then wrap the child back into the damp towel for a few minutes before putting on their clothes. This will especially trap in the moisture (like giant spa socks). If your child's skin is dry, you may need to apply these multiple times/day.



- Diaper area: **Vaseline or Coconut oil** are the best things to apply to the diaper area with most diaper changes for both boys and girls. If boys are circumcised, you especially need to use Vaseline with every diaper change until the circumcision heals. Diaper rashes in this age group come from too much rubbing to get the urine and stool off of the skin (not from the urine and stool touching the skin). That's why you want to use a greasy barrier with most diaper changes-that will allow you to clean the urine and stool off of the skin without needing to rub aggressively. At the first sign of a red tushie, use **Desitin original (purple tube)** in the diaper area (both on tushie and genitalia as needed). Apply a thick layer (like an inch thick) to all reddened areas, and when the child has a urine or stool, clean gently afterwards, leaving a layer of Desitin on the skin. In other words, don't wipe all of the diaper cream with every diaper change. It is hard to get off for a reason. Just wipe lightly with a wet paper towel (you should avoid wipes when the skin is irritated), and then put more Desitin on top of it. You should almost heal that tushie within a few diaper changes. If not, please make an appointment. Desitin original is better than any other diaper cream since it contains 40% zinc oxide, which is the active ingredient that really works. Other diaper care products contain only 10-15 % zinc oxide.



- **Massage:** Baby massage is a great way to keep your child's skin healthy, and it promotes bonding, attachment and reassurance through skin contact. Massage also helps to normalize muscle tone, improve blood circulation and improve the texture of the skin. Massage can also help babies sleep better, and may help with gas. The best kind of oil to use is unscented oil, preferably vegetable or organic oil such as apricot, grape seed or soybean. The reason for using an unscented oil is so your baby can become familiar with your personal scent, thus aiding in the bonding process. Avoid Baby Oil (due to the chemicals and fragrance added to it) and any nut oils (like almond or peanut oil due to risk of nut allergy).
- Prescription Creams: Certain medications may be prescribed for severe dry skin or eczema. We will explain how to use these medications more closely. These creams should be applied 1-2 times a day sparingly. Apply a thin film to inflamed patches when needed and discontinue when the rash improves, usually no more than 5-7 days. Apply these creams underneath the Eucerin or Aquaphor.
- **Ear Care:** NEVER USE Q-tips-even the baby safety tip ones. Use a warm washcloth to get out as much of the ear wax as possible. Using a few drops of olive oil in the ears 1-2 times a week can also help keep the ears "clean". You can use this after 6 months of age. Ear wax comes from the debridement of dead skin cells in the ear canals. Using the olive oil keep the ear canal skin healthy and less skin cells slough off, therefore, less ear wax production. Also, using the oil makes any wax present softer and more likely to come to the surface where you can grab it with a wash cloth.
- **Oral hygiene:** For newborns, use a warm wet washcloth to wash the tongue and oral membranes 2-3 times/day to remove any stuck-on milk. Later in infancy, you can use a toothbrush that goes on your finger to wash the oral surfaces. Once a child develops teeth it is recommended to brush his or her teeth twice a day with a grain-of-rice sized segment of fluoride toothpaste. At age 3, the amount of fluoride toothpaste increases to the size of a pea. Children should start seeing a dentist at age 2. Fluoride free training toothpaste is never recommended. It is recommended that children between the ages of 6 months-12 years who live in Nassau or Suffolk County take a daily fluoride vitamin, which we prescribe.

All products available at: Franwin Pharmacy 127 Mineola Blvd. Mineola, NY 11501
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