309 - Baby Acne and Diaper Rash Transcript

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Season Three Introduction

Hi, welcome to season three of the baby manual podcast, the holistic mama's handbook. This season will go through alternative and supportive care to help you take care of your little one when they're sick, but too young to take most medicines.

I'm your host, a pediatrician and mom, and the author of The Baby Manual and The Holistic Mama's Handbook, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello, welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual podcast.

We're going to talk all about skin today, and I'm going be talking about baby acne and diaper rash.

Overview of Baby Skin Topics

Just a reminder, I do have these in my books, both the baby manual and the Holistic Mama's Handbook, which are available on Amazon. along with a bunch of other skin stuff too, but today is just focusing on baby acne and diaper rash.

So baby Acne is something that starts in the first month or so of life and it looks like pimples on the baby's face and upper chest.

What Causes Baby Acne

Acne in general is caused by a combination of hormones plus dryness plus a little skin irritation and then the skin kind of over produces oil which gets stuck in the glands.

So hormones cause increased oil production and when babies are born they have all of the hormones from mom in their body so they do have a lot of hormone in there and that causes the sebaceous glands to produce more oil to moisturize the skins and the oil gets trapped in pores and turns into acne.

Also being overheated. Babies don't sweat a whole lot, but being over heated can make them get a little more oily as well and a bit sweaty. That can cause the same thing.

And then dirt or lotion or even milk, like if babies are spitting up and getting some milk on their skin, that can also get trapped in the pores and do the and that can block those pores off and making the acne flare up a little bit more.

Now, interestingly enough, when the skin gets too dry, that sends a signal to the body to produce more oil as well. So if you wash your baby too often or their skin get too dried, then that cause acne to get even worse too.

Taking care of acne is sort of a fine balance of keeping the skincare clean and slightly moisturized but not overly moisturize. So from a Western standpoint, we really don't do a whole lot for baby acne because it's self-limited.

It goes away on its own, it doesn't scar, It doesn' really last for that long.

Basic Baby Acne Care

it can last several weeks, even sometimes a few months, but it is mostly a cosmetic thing. So we sort of jokingly will tell parents just to use a filter on your camera when you take pictures of the baby because its really just like a cosmetics thing and it's going to go away on its own and they will get that nice soft baby skin soon.

But other things that can kind of help a little bit, you can wash them just with plain water or with a very gentle unscented baby soap once or twice a week and that'll keep their skin from getting too dry.

And then when you dry them off after a bath, You can put a light unscented lotion on them, or if you live in a place where it's pretty humid, then you don't necessarily need to put anything on their skin afterwards.

If you keep the room temperature between about 68 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit, which is about 20 to 22 degrees Celsius, that's a nice comfortable temperature for babies.

Basically, if you're comfortable at room temperatures, your baby will be as well. And babies usually just need one thin layer extra than adults in order to keep warm.

So a thin blanket or an extra onesie under their outfit is usually enough to keep them just warm enough so that they don't get overheated and also not too cold.

You don' necessarily need to change anything in your diet if your baby has acne and you don''t need change their formula if they're formula fed. And also, you don't want to use any acne washes that are meant for teenagers and adults because those are really drying to the skin and even can cause some chemical irritation of baby skin because they have really sensitive skin.

When Baby Acne Needs a Doctor

So don' use those kind of acne wash on your baby. Also, none of the acne lotions or creams are needed. If your baby has pimples that are larger than two millimeters across, that would be a reason to call your doctor.

So if they're really big boils, thats probably something different. Or if their filled with yellow pus, or if there have clear fluid, its probably a different kind of a rash.

If you see that there are clusters of blisters, Thats something else as well. And if you're not really sure if its baby acne or something, it's always a good idea just to see your Doctor and make sure that that's what it is.

but baby acne itself is not dangerous and does go away on its own. From a traditional Chinese medicine standpoint, acupuncture doesn't specifically treat baby acne but can decrease overall inflammation and acne is related to inflammation, so it may help a little bit, but also an acupuncturist that is certified in Chinese herbalism might be able to prescribe you some topical or even some oral herbs that might help with the baby So you can speak to a pediatric acupuncturist about that.

Alternative Remedies for Baby Acne

Chiropractic doesn't specifically treat baby acne. Chaeropractic does also help a little bit with overall wellness and inflammation, so might potentially help with other things going on at the same time, but I wouldn't take a baby to chiropractor just for baby acne.

From a nutrition supplement standpoint, again, don't change anything in your diet. They're not allergic to anything. It's just sort of a normal hormonal thing going on.

If you're breastfeeding, you can try putting breast milk on baby acne. I see this online a lot, especially on like social media. A lot of moms recommending this and then a lotta other moms commenting saying, I did this, and it really helped.

Breast milk is pH neutral. It does have antibodies in it and so sometimes acne gets colonized with bacteria and those bacteria can make the acne worse and the antibodies and breast milk might potentially help to combat that as well.

And breastmilk is a little bit like lotion in that it contains water and fat both and that can potentially helps to

moisturize your baby's skin and might help and shouldn't hurt at least.

From a homeopathic standpoint, there aren't any oral remedies that are recommended for baby acne, but calendula cream is something that you might want to apply topically.

Calendula is made from marigolds and is soothing to skin. And so you can try the calendular cream. Again, if any of these treatments seem to be making your baby's acne worse, like any other lotions or anything, then definitely stop using them.

And then from an aromatherapy standpoint, you can try a couple of different essential oils applied in a carrier oil right after a bath once or twice a week.

And those are calendula oil, lavender oil oregano oil and tea tree oil. Oregano and tea tree are antimicrobial, so they can also help to kind of clear the skin a little bit.

Diaper Rash Causes and Types

And lavender's anti-inflammatory, and calendula also kind cools down skin stuff. So if you mix these into a carrier oil, I have instructions on mixing in the Holistic Mama's Handbook.

You want to make it very dilute, because essential oils are really strong and concentrated. If you put them directly on baby's skin, they could actually cause chemical irritation.

use an oil that's something like jojoba oil is really good or one of the like carriers that like an inert coconut oil can help, like a fractionated coconut, oil.

That's a liquid can, help as well as a carrier oil, regular coconut. Oil seems to be a little bit acidic and sometimes can make this a, little worse. So again, you can try using a couple of different ones, see what seems, to help your baby.

But if it's making it worse, definitely stop doing it. And it will go away on its own. I can't emphasize that enough. So also just, we call it tincture of time.

Just waiting it out will make it go way. All right, for diaper rash. Diaper rash is caused by a combination of moisture and friction. And a lot of times we'll also get colonized with something like either a yeast or bacteria.

Most babies will at some point have a diaper rash and there are lots of things you can do to try to prevent it. But if your baby does get one, I don't want you to feel like you've done something wrong or you failed because diaper rashes extremely common and it can happen really quickly.

It starts off with redness and irritation of the skin, but then it can get colonized with this yeast or bacteria. And if it's colonize with yeast, it is typically candida that colonizes it and that causes a sort of solid area of rash with these little pinpoint satellite lesions around it, little dots that show up around.

Then if its bacterial, There are two types of bacterial infections in the diaper area. One is where you get boils in that area, so you'll see these pustules that are about two, three millimeters across.

They are filled with sort of a whitish-yellowish pus right around it, and that is typically caused either by strep or staph. And then there's perianal strep infection, which is also called strept butt, and that tends to happen in older children over a year.

And that's like a bright red circle around the anus. Strep butt comes from the gut.

Preventing and Treating Diaper Rash

So children who have strep throat will get it, or sometimes just, you might not even notice signs of streps, like young babies can be colonized with strepin.

It can't be normal. But then when it gets into that broken down skin around the anus, it just causes this bright red circle and it's coming from inside.

With perianal strepe, from a Western standpoint, we actually treat that with oral antibiotics because then they're pooping out the antibiotics and getting it all the way through.

Whereas if it's boils we're just doing a topical treatment on that. I'm going back just a regular diaper rash from Western standpoint. So prevention is the best or trying to at least decrease the likelihood because remember you can't always prevent it.

Remember change the diaper as soon as it is wet or dirty. If the baby has peter pooped you want to change it as fast as possible. You can use water wipes after each poop.

You don't necessarily have to use wipes after a baby has peed, but I'd say if they're just peeing several times in a row, maybe after like three peas, use a wipe to clean them off so that they are not having the uric acid on there.

And then once they already have a rash, you do want to wipe gently, just with water is good because the scented wipes can tend to make diaper rash worse.

You can apply diaper cream, there are two main subtypes of diaper creams. There's the zinc oxide creams, which are the white ones. The most common brand name in the US is Desitin of that, just the regular one, not the extra strength.

Extra strength for some reason seems to make diaper rashes worse for whatever reason. I've just seen some really bad rashes with that. But the regular strength one is good, or any zinc oxide cream.

Zinc oxide helps to heal the skin. And then there's petroleum-based ones, are the other big group of ones. So that's things like Vaseline or Aquaphor.

What the petroleum ones do is they create a barrier. They will just cover the skincare and then make it so that more pee and poop doesn't get onto the face and continue to irritate it after it's already there.

when it helps the skin to heal from the bottom up. A&D ointment is another petroleum-based one that has vitamin A and D in it, and vitamins A & D do help with skin healing as well, so I really like that one too.

And you can try alternating creams too, So for a diaper rash that's not going away immediately, like within, you know, a change or two, You can alternate, do like a zinc oxide one time and a petroleum the other time.

But if it's not going away within two or three days, it is probably colonized with something and you need to see your doctor.

Candida and Bacterial Diaper Rash Treatments

You can also try airing it out. Just getting some fresh air and letting it dry can help a diaper rash to go away faster. But also keep a close eye on your baby because they do pee and poop a lot and so you don't want to make a big mess around the house.

If it summer time, this is like a great time to be air it. let them hang out outside in case they do go potty outside. Don't use baby powder. We used to recommend baby power a lot, especially like talcum powder, but the problem with baby powders, we don't suggest it anymore because it gets aerosolized and then so it goes into the air and the babies breathe it into their lungs and it can cause some pretty bad lung irritation.

So even like cornstarch or anything powdered like that, We don' recommend anymore in the diaper area because the baby's do breathe in and that causes lung problems.

So for Candida diaper rash, your doctor might prescribe some Nystatin cream. Nystatin is an antifungal. Another thing that you can try before doing the Nystatin is you could try a mixture of apple cider vinegar and water, one-to-one.

And I like apple-cider vinegar because it's slightly less acidic than white vinegar. Definitely don't use balsamic, that has more sugar content in it relatively.

But apple cider is great one to one mixed with water and then just dab that on with a cotton ball three times a day. Vinegar is anti-fungal and so that can also help to make it go away.

But if that's not working, a nystatin cream will help. And you can also try an over-the-counter, like a ringworm cream. Those just tend to not be as specific for Canada as nystatin is.

And then if it's a bacterial one that has the boils in it, your doctor will probably prescribe muperosin ointment. And muberosine is effective against strep and staph, and it is a really good antibiotic.

It's three times a day. The nystatin is also three time a days. So if your baby has a rash that's colonized and you're using a medicated cream, you are definitely changing diapers more than three-times-a-day, right?

So in between those, on the other diaper changes, You can just use a regular diaper cream like a barrier cream. Keep in mind if you're doing cloth diapers that petroleum tends to make cloth diaper waterproof and therefore basically useless as diapers.

So something like a beeswax based cream might be better. Those are just not as strong as of barrier creams as the petroleum based ones. Also, I've noticed that sometimes certain brands of diapers will cause some babies to react and I think it's because of the scents that are in them because they smell good.

And so the scented diapers or just even just trying different brands of diapers, some diapers are more wicking than others, they get the moisture away better.

You can try experimenting with different types of diapers if your baby tends to be really prone to these. Then of course, I mentioned already the perianal strap, if they have that, we would do oral antibiotics, typically amoxicillin for that unless they're allergic.

So from an acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine standpoint, acupuncture doesn't specifically treat diaper rash, but Chinese herbs might be helpful.

Alternative Care and Household Prevention

So if you check with an Acupuncturist, a pediatric Acupunkturists, they should be able to suggest either some topical herbs or a diaper cream with Chinese Herbs in it that might help it go away faster.

Chiropractic also does not help specifically with diaper rash. It helps with lots of other things, but not diaper rush. And then from a nutrition and supplement standpoint, So acidic foods will make diaper rashes worse.

Anything acidic will kind of burn the skin a little bit. And I find it a lot with strawberries in babies. It seems like a lotta babies will get a rash after strawberries, but also citrus fruits and tomatoes can make it worse Probiotics can actually help a bit with a diaper rash.

So if you'd like to give your baby probiotics, any kind or oral probiotic is good for helping to combat diaper From a homeopathic standpoint, calendula cream, again, can be applied topically for diaper rash as well because calendular is healing for the skin.

And there are a handful of remedies that are suggested. If you speak to a certified classical homeopathy, they might be able to guide treatment a little bit better.

And remember from a Western standpoint that homeopathy is not fully supported by Western medicine because the types of studies that we do for it don't prove that it actually helps.

But you can speak to a homeopath about it and they look at sort of a constellation of symptoms and do they tailor the treatment specifically to your baby?

It may or may not be helpful. but the ones that are typically recommended are Borax Veneta, Calendula Aficionalis, Cantharis, MercSol, Nitric Acid, and Sulfur.

And those are all remedies that sold as pellets, like little sugar pellet that you can dissolve in water and give a little bit of that water to your baby, or you could even apply that to the rash.

From an aromatherapy standpoint, there isn't really anything for a regular diaper rash that you want to put on there. Just, you know, regular Diaper Cream is enough, but nothing scented.

But if your baby has a Candida Diper Rash, You can use a carrier oil with oregano, geranium, or tea tree in it. And remember, those are anti-microbial, and so those can actually help to kill the candida that is in there and to make it go away faster.

And then for a bacterial diaper rash, like if your baby has boils in the diaper area, you can use tea tree oil topically or lemongrass oil, again, in a carrier oil.

And you use a Q-tip to apply that directly onto the boils. That can also help to kill that bacteria and to make them go away a little bit faster. One last note about when babies are getting boils in the diaper area, if you are prescribed muperosin ointment, I typically recommend treating anybody who changes the diapers in their house because most babies will get this from their caregivers.

The bacteria that causes it tends to live under the nails and in the nose.

Wrap-Up and Next Episode Preview

So if you're treating your baby with mupeurose anointment, you also want to put it under your nails, and inside your nose three times a day for 10 days to eradicate it from the household.

And you want do that for anyone that has changed your babies diaper. In daycare, you can suggest it to the day care workers there. Of course, we can't force them to do it, but it's good to suggest that they at least try to also get rid of that colonization and then any family members in the house should be treated at the same time so that hopefully it gets eradicated and doesn't come back again.

In the Holistic Mama's Handbook, we also have some alternative and supportive care treatments for ringworm and for cradle cap. And last week's episode, We talked about eczema, which is another skin thing.

Again, these are also all in the baby manual. I hope this helps. If you want to check those out, they're available on Amazon. There are some links in the show notes for those.

And stay tuned because next week we're going to be talking all about sleep. I know I've done a few episodes about asleep, but this one's going be really good because it's all of the supportive and alternative stuff related to that.

Have a great day and thank you for listening. Thank you for listening to the Baby Manual Podcast. Please hit that subscribe button below so you don't miss the new episodes as they come out.

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