



*Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

**Cradle Cap (Seborrheic Dermatitis)**

**Who gets cradle cap?** Cradle cap is a common skin problem in infants. It usually starts shortly after birth and may continue until the age of one. In unusual cases, it may continue until 2 years of age.

**What is cradle cap?** It is basically dandruff in infants. Certain glands in the scalp cause a buildup of a greasy material called sebum (see-bum). The scalp then looks flaky or has yellow scales. Sometimes parents think the scalp is dry and will use baby oil or greases but leaving these on the scalp may actually make it worse. Even though we call this condition cradle cap, it may also be found on the face, ears, eyebrows, front of the chest or diaper area.

**How is cradle cap diagnosed?** Your doctor will look for flaky or greasy yellow scales on the scalp. She may also look around the ears, face, chest and diaper area. It is important to know when the rash first appeared, if it is itchy and any family history of skin rashes. There is no need to perform any tests or cultures to make this diagnosis.

**How is cradle cap treated?** It is important to keep the scalp dry. You should shampoo the baby's hair once a day or once every other day. It is okay to use any baby shampoo if the cradle cap is mild. For more severe cases, use an anti-dandruff shampoo like Selsun Blue® or Head and Shoulders®. Be careful not to get the shampoo in the baby's eyes, as these shampoos will sting. If there are thick scales in the hair, apply some baby oil, massage it into the scalp and let it sit. After 3 to 5 minutes, you may use a soft bristled brush through the hair to lift the scales off. Make sure to wash all the baby oil out of the scalp after. In more severe cases, your doctor may recommend using a mild cortisone cream on the scalp or face. The good news is that almost all children will outgrow cradle cap by their first birthday.

**Today your doctor recommends:** \_\_\_\_\_

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