

## Inflammatory conditions



### **Infantile Seborrhoeic Dermatitis / Cradle Cap**

#### **Important Points**

- Seborrhoeic dermatitis is not itchy and does not upset the baby
- Avoid soap as this may irritate dermatitis
- Use unperfumed bath oil instead of soap
- Use plain moisturisers such as aqueous or sorbolene cream
- Olive oil may be massaged into the scalp several times a week to remove scale
- Seborrhoeic dermatitis clears in most very young babies by the age of two months or so

#### **What is it?**

Seborrhoeic dermatitis is a common inflammatory disease of the skin which can involve the scalp and body folds of very young children. Unlike infantile (atopic) eczema, seborrhoeic dermatitis is not itchy. In most newborn infants it settles by the age of two months. This is different to infantile eczema which tends to occur after the age of two months and continues. The mild and very common form affecting the scalp in infants is called cradle cap.

#### **Where does it occur?**

In infancy, the site most commonly affected is the scalp with clearly visible greasy, yellowishwhite, thickened scale stuck to the hair or scalp. It can spread down on to the central face, behind the ears and on the neck. The nappy area and armpits can also be involved, with more redness than scale, and usually with involvement of the groin creases. Seborrhoeic dermatitis affecting the groin creases commonly becomes infected with thrush (candida).

#### **How is it treated?**

If it is mild, cradle cap can be treated with plain moisturisers such as aqueous cream or sorbolene cream or even olive oil. If it is more active these can be combined with a salicylic acid cream or a very mild cortisone cream recommended by either a pharmacist or your family doctor.

Seborrhoeic dermatitis in the nappy area is often treated by adding plain bath oil to the bath water and using a soap substitute such as aqueous cream or emulsifying ointment. A mild cortisone cream may be recommended by a

doctor to be used with the addition of a cream to treat any infection with thrush. If the rash occurs on the face a mild cortisone cream may be used for a day or two and then the improvement maintained with regular application of moisturisers.

**Further Information**

Your Maternal and Child Health nurse.

Your pharmacist.

Your family doctor.

A dermatologist.

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