

Cradle Cap

Cradle cap (seborrheic dermatitis) is a very common scalp condition that affects many babies. It causes **yellowy, greasy, scaly patches on the scalp** and sometimes around the eyebrows and in folds of the skin anywhere on the body. It is usually a harmless condition that doesn't cause discomfort, and will clear up by itself in time. Any hair-loss caused by cradle cap will be temporary, and the hair should grow back well after the condition clears.

It is not altogether clear why babies get cradle cap, but it is thought to be linked to **residual hormones left in the body from the birth**. A surge of hormones can cause an imbalance in the **sebaceous glands**, causing them to produce more sebum and oil and leading to the skin cells your baby would normally shed to get stuck to the excess oil and build up.

Cradle cap is more common in families who have a history of **hayfever, eczema** and **asthma**, as there may be an inherited intolerance to allergens. Medical treatment for cradle cap is not normally necessary, but if the skin becomes **itchy, red, sore** or **inflamed**, check with your health visitor or GP.

Treatments

Home remedies are the usual course of action, and you might like to try:

- Wash your baby's hair with a gentle baby shampoo to loosen the skin flakes.
- Gently dry and brush the hair to dislodge further skin flakes.
- Rub the scalp with a baby oil or olive oil to soften the flakes.
- Moisturise the area regularly to keep the area nourished.

Treat the scalp area gently, and don't be tempted to pick the flakes of skin off as this can cause sore patches on the skin. Ensure bath water is tepid, not too hot, as heat dries the skin out more, and don't shampoo your babies hair too often as this can also have a drying effect.



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