



## Managing cradle cap

**Cradle cap is a common skin condition in babies which appears in the first weeks of life. It is not clear what causes cradle cap. It may be caused by the oils that babies produce from the glands in their skin. It usually clears up on its own, but there are things you can try to make it better.**

Many babies have mild cradle cap which usually disappears after a few months but for some babies it can take up to 6-9 months to clear.

- Cradle cap is sometimes called 'infantile seborrhoeic dermatitis'.
- Cradle cap cannot be caught from another baby.
- Cradle cap appears as greasy, yellow/brown, scaly patches on the scalp. Some babies have a thick, scaly layer covering the whole scalp. Over time, these scales may become flaky and rub off easily.
- Cradle cap can appear on other parts of the body, like the eyebrows, nose and nappy area
- Sometimes, when these greasy scales lift off, hair may come out with them, but don't worry – your baby's hair will soon grow back.
- Cradle cap is not usually itchy, sore or uncomfortable, so your baby should feed, play and sleep normally.
- Your baby's cradle cap should settle by itself.

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**For additional Parent Tips see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)**

The information in this resource was updated on 07/04/2022.

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## Things you can try to get rid of cradle cap

 <b>Do</b>	 <b>Don't</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wash your baby's hair regularly with mild, unperfumed baby shampoo and gently loosen scales with a soft brush</li><li>• Gently rub on baby oil or vegetable oil to help soften the scales</li><li>• Overnight, use baby oil, vegetable oil or a thick emolient (like petroleum jelly - Vaseline for example). Wash with baby shampoo in the morning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not pick the scales off as this can cause an infection</li><li>• Do not use peanut oil (because of the allergy risk)</li><li>• Do not use olive oil as research has shown that it may not be suitable for babies' skin and is linked with infections</li><li>• Do not use adult shampoo or soap</li></ul>

- See your GP or health visitor if you are worried about your baby's cradle cap.

You should take your baby to see a GP if:

- the cradle cap is all over the body;
- the crusts leak fluid or bleed;
- the affected areas look swollen;
- there is no improvement after a few weeks of treatment.

These could be signs of an infection or another skin condition, that is not cradle cap, and needs a different treatment.

### Further information:

More information can be obtained via the following websites:

**NHS** - Cradle cap: <https://bit.ly/3Jggsq4>

**National Eczema Society** - Seborrhoeic dermatitis & cradle cap in infants: <https://bit.ly/33bY9mu>

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