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Cradle cap is a common skin disorder affecting newborn babies, usually those younger than three months of age. The medical name for this condition is infant seborrheic dermatitis. It is generally not uncomfortable for the infant, except in severe cases when it may be itchy. 1 Cradle cap in children, teenagers and adults is usually known as seborrheic dermatitis, or seborrhea. Seborrheic dermatitis can affect any part of the body, whereas cradle cap is usually restricted to the scalp and face.Cradle cap is a form of seborrheic dermatitis, which is a form of dermatitis, or skin inflammation. It is related to eczema, or atopic dermatitis, another form of dermatitis. However, seborrheic dermatitis is not as itchy or inflamed as atopic dermatitis. For more information, see this resource on atopic dermatitis.Psoriasis is not a form of dermatitis, but it is often difficult to distinguish between psoriasis and dermatitis. Psoriasis, like seborrheic or atopic dermatitis, can affect the scalp or skin fold area. It is an inflammatory skin disorder, often appearing as red skin overlaid with white, flaky areas, which leads some people to confuse it with seborrheic dermatitis. However, psoriasis is caused by an overactive immune system causing inflammation, which causes new skin cells to be produced and pushed to the surface too quickly. Because the body cannot shed these cells quickly enough, they build up on the skin surface and form red, scaly, itchy plaques. 2Read more about plaque psoriasis here >> Yeah, although in older children, teenagers and adults it is generally not known as cradle cap, but is instead called seborrheic dermatitis or seborrhea. Dandruff of the scalp is a mild form of seborrheic dermatitis commonly found in teenagers and adults.Cradle cap usually occurs on the parts of the body that have the highest density of oil-producing (sebaceous) glands, which produce an oily, waxy substance. The parts of the body that are affected by cradle cap in babies include: 1 3The scalpThe eyelidsThe face, around the nose, chin, and mouthThe forehead, the back of the ears, or the back of the neckIn other skin folds, for example in the armpits, inner elbows, and backs of the kneesThe buttocks, gluteal cleft (groove between the buttocks), upper thighs, and lower abdomen (the diaper area)Good to know: Another rash that commonly affects the diaper area of infants and toddlers is diaper rash, also known as nappy rash. If a baby has irritated, itchy skin on other parts of their body, they may have baby eczema, a form of atopic dermatitis. In severe cases, other parts of the body can be affected. 4 The general appearance of cradle cap/seborrheic dermatitis is the scales in infants, toddlers, children, teenagers, and adults. Cradle cap usually appears as a yellow or brassy scale on a baby's scalp that may look oily or waxy. The skin usually looks normal underneath the scale. However, the appearance of cradle cap can vary, and can also present as: 5 3Mild, patchy scalesExtensive, thick scaly patchesThick, oily yellow scalesBrown crusting patchesred skin surrounded by pink patches; this is more common in skin fold areasSwollen areas of skin - more common in skin foldsCradle cap is not the result of bacteria, an allergy or an infection and should not feel hot to the touch, itch, smell or weep fluids. If the rash feels warm, smells bad or weeps fluids, infection may have occurred, 1 and medical help should be sought. 4 Good to know: Whether or not cradle cap itches can vary depending on who is affected, which body part is affected, and how severe the problem is. Although babies are often not bothered by it, affected adults can experience considerable itching or even burning, especially when the rash affects the ear. However, although cradle cap is not always itchy, other skin conditions affecting babies do itch. These include diaper rash and atopic dermatitis, as well as ringworm. If you are concerned that your baby may have a skin condition, you can do a free symptom assessment using the Ada app at any time.Cradle cap is most common in babies younger than six months of age and often appears within the first few weeks of life. It usually goes away once the baby is older than nine months of age. In older children, conditions that cause symptoms that look like cradle cap include: 6 Good to know: Atopic and contact dermatitis, impetigo, psoriasis, and ringworm, which are also common skin conditions in babies and young children, can be easily distinguished from cradle caps as they are all itchy. Cradle cap is not usually itchy in babies unless it is very severe.Cradle cap can spread to the diaper area, but diaper rash is a separate condition, which manifests as irritated, tender and red skin. This is caused by the infant's skin coming into contact with a diaper that is soiled by urine or feces. 7 Babies with diaper rash tend to be irritated because of the friction and the heat from the diaper rash.What causes cradle cap is not entirely certain, but in babies may be the result of overactive oil glands, sebaceous glands, or the mother's hormones. 3 These glands produce sebum, an oily or waxy substance that lubricates and waterproofs the skin. Another factor contributing to cradle cap or seborrhea in adults may be the colonization of the sebaceous glands by natural yeasts, 3 specifically particular subspecies of the genus *Malassezia*. 5 It is possible that these yeasts do not cause cradle cap, but rather take advantage of the overproduction of sebum that is already happening. 6It is also likely that stress, chemical irritants and dry, cold weather may play a role in causing cradle cap. 1 Cradle cap is not caused by bacteria, allergies, lack of hygiene or lack of care. reff 1 It is not contagious. 3Cradle cap can be treated quite easily and will usually clear up within a few weeks or months. 9In older people, cradle cap, or seborrheic dermatitis, can be caused by the same factors that lead to the condition in infants. 10To diagnose cradle cap or seborrheic dermatitis, a doctor will make a visual inspection of the affected skin. Blood and other laboratory tests are not usually needed.However, if the condition does not improve with treatment, it is possible that it is not cradle cap or seborrhea, but something that looks similar such as psoriasis or an allergic reaction. In such cases it may be necessary to return to the doctor and possibly undergo tests to determine what is causing the problem. Mild cradle cap can be treated at home with easily available remedies like baby shampoo, baby oil, or almond or olive oil. A pharmacist may recommend trying petroleum jelly or coal tar shampoo. In most cases, these monitoring and home remedies do work. However, if the rash bleeds, oozes fluid, is hot to the touch or spreads extensively, it is very important to see a doctor. In more severe cases, a doctor may prescribe: 11 Topical steroids such as hydrocortisoneAntifungal such as ketoconazole or imidazoleHome remedies can be effective in reducing discomfort and improving symptoms of mild or moderate cradle cap. More severe, or persistent, cases may need specialized treatments prescribed by a doctor. How long treatment is necessary depends on the method being used and how often the condition is.Cradle cap in babies can be treated at home. One way to treat cradle cap is to warm a small amount of clean, natural oil such as jojoba, almond, coconut or olive oil, and massage it into the affected area. After 15 minutes, the flakes can be gently brushed off. The area should then be thoroughly shampooed, with special care taken to ensure that no oil remains on the skin. 3 Flakes can be removed from the skin by softly brushing with a soft brush or terry cloth towel. Do not scratch the scalp with fingernails or other implements, as this may break the skin.White petroleum jelly can be applied daily to the baby's scalp and is known to soften scales, which can then be brushed off. Regular washing with baby shampoo is also useful. 5 In some cases, coal tar shampoo may be used, but this can sometimes irritate the skin. The same is true for shampoos devised to control dandruff on adult scalp; as these can sting, they are not very suitable for use on babies. 11 6 Good to know: There is some controversy about the efficacy of olive oil in the treatment of cradle cap. Some studies have shown that olive oil disturbs the natural skin barrier, but others have cast doubt on this. General moisturizing lotions are also generally not used to treat or relieve cradle cap, as they contain fatty acids that may worsen the condition. Moisturizers designed specifically for use on skin affected by seborrheic dermatitis are available, and a doctor or dermatologist may be able to advise on this.Severe, persistent or recurrent infantile seborrheic dermatitis can be treated with shampoos, creams, and gels. Hydrocortisone, imidazole or ketoconazole are all available as prescription creams or gels for use in the treatment of severe cases of cradle cap. Imidazole or ketoconazole creams are applied several times a week, while hydrocortisone cream is applied daily. 12 Good to know: Steroid creams may help relieve inflammation and itching in the short term but, as they can lead to recurrence of symptoms, and have other side-effects, they should not be used for long periods.Cradle cap cannot be prevented. However, it is easily treated and need not affect the infant's quality of life. Not all infants will be affected by cradle cap. Some ways of reducing the chance of skin irritation include:Making sure that all traces of shampoo, soap or cleansers are rinsed off the body during bathing, to reduce the chance of skin irritation.Cradle cap may recur after treatment with a mild shampoo – like some we've mentioned here – to treat cradle cap. How we choose the best cradle cap shampoo? Our product recommendations are based on expert parent feedback from the millions of parents and parents-to-be in our
community. Our editors adhere to the highest research and reporting standards and our team of vetted OB/GYNs, pediatricians and other health professionals ensure our recommended products are safe and effective for you and your baby.The reviews don't lie – and Mustela's shampoo earned a lot of love from our community. This tried-and-true formula is extra gentle on sensitive newborn skin and made of 99 percent plant-based ingredients, and sans parabens and phthalates. But that doesn't mean it isn't strong enough to be effective: Parents report that this shampoo clears up cradle cap patches within just a few washes. "Took one wash with mustela to clear up my son's!" raves one WTE mom.The foam shampoo is also easy to dispense and lather into baby's scalp without it dripping into her eyes. The only downside? You'll get just over 5 ounces when buying this product, so if you're looking for a great value for money, this may not be the best option.Size: 5.07 ouncesCommunity Reviews "I love that stuff!!!! Can't emphasize it enough!!! My lil man had cradle cap and it cleared in 2-3 days. It came back once or twice after but only last a day with the Mustela. I use the lotion and the body wash as well. And they have waterless mustela body wash if u don't have time to do a full bath" -sweetbrookee"Mustela... it's a bit more pricey but totally worth it!!!!" -BabyBH2022 "The cradle cap shampoo and lotion by mustela were very helpful for my LO! Cleared up in a couple of days. " -SLEspino14quyher is a pediatrician- and dermatologist-recommended brand long trusted by What to Expect parents for its healing skin products. "I prefer Aquaphor for everything," says one mom, including its baby wash and shampoo. It is gentle on baby's sensitive skin and scalp and enriched with chamomile essence to soothe the skin without drying it. Parents love the mild, tear-free formula for the fact that it's fragrance-free, so if you or your little one has sensitivities to fragrances, this shampoo is for you. Size: 16.9 ouncesCommunity Reviews "My daughter had two episodes of it. I wash her scalp with baby aquaphor soap and one of the cradle cap brushes and it went away after one use." -rbaba123 "Aquaphor Baby Wash & Shampoo has worked well for us." -dundermiffnappeanonym "Aquaphor body wash makes baby's skin super soft!! I love it!" -mamaNurselife "This extra-mild shampoo is dermatologist-approved to be gentle on skin and tear-free." It's also hypoallergenic and free of parabens and mineral oils, so it's suitable for even the most reactive skin types. "My children have very sensitive skin so I use Cetaphil [and] it works wonders," says one WTE mom. The addition of organic calendula extract in the formula leaves skin smooth and moisturized. One gripe: Though it is dermatologist-tested to be appropriate for sensitive skin, keep in mind that it does contain fragrance. Size: 13.5 ouncesCommunity Reviews "Someone on here told me to use the cetaphil wash for baby acne. Well I've also been using it as a shampoo and my daughter's cradle cap is gone too." -Tlb52 "We started off with Cetaphil and LOVED it." -babbymomma2426 This shampoo is medicated to help fight itching, itching, scaling... you name it. It's the first over-the-counter cradle cap shampoo with pyrithione zinc (which is used in adult dandruff shampoos, too), and doubles as a body wash. The formula is fragrance-free, dye-free, alcohol-free, paraben-free, sulfate-free, cruelty-free, vegan and BPA-free (did you get all that?). And it works, happy parents say. "Used this twice, and my LO's cradle cap was gone," says one WTE mom. Other parents say it was the only thing that helped after trying everything else. One thing to note: Because this is medicated, you should chat with the pediatrician before using it on your child. Size: 8 ouncesCommunity Reviews "It's really dry (co springs is something like 7000 feet in elevation) in winter, so I got this for my little man at the suggestion of another forum post! This combined with some coconut oil every morning before daycare has taken care of my little guys extremely dry scalp!" -sarachatomb "Dr Eddie's Happy Cappy. It worked wonders. And still does for eczema." -edouble -2009 "Happy Cappy. Now it's my go-to for my toddler. My pediatrician recommended it." -Scout - Powderly scent with soft floral and vanilla Conclusion There's no way you can prevent the cradle cap in your baby. However, using the right baby shampoo and brush might keep the cradle cap away. If you are planning for regular use, make sure you are choosing a mild and tear-free shampoo. 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Though it might look concerning, it typically doesn't cause any discomfort or itchiness for your baby. It is an extremely common skin condition in babies between the ages of 6 and 12 months, and thankfully it's easy to treat. While most cradle cap goes away on its own, a little encouragement from the best shampoo for cradle cap can help clear it up. Cradle cap is fairly easy to recognize, and the symptoms are typically harmless. Here's what to look out for: • Yellowish, greasy patches or crusts on your baby's scalp • Crusts that may spread to areas like the eyebrows, behind the ears, or around the nappy area • Flaking crusts that can leave the skin underneath looking red • No signs of itching or pain, so it doesn't bother your baby While cradle cap is not uncomfortable for your little one, it can sometimes appear unsightly. As the flaky, waxy crusts dry, they might leave behind a bit of redness. Occasionally, you may notice a small amount of hair coming away with the flakes, but don't worry—this is temporary, and the hair will grow back. It's important to avoid scratching or picking at the crust, as this can cause irritation or lead to infection. If you're unsure if it's cradle cap or something more serious, such as eczema, it's best to consult your pediatrician. Use gently on the baby's scalp by massaging it for a few minutes. Be careful so that the shampoo doesn't reach the eyes, as a few users reported it's not completely tear-free. Hair Type: Dry | Key ingredients: Oat & Calendula | Tear-Free: No | Sulfate-Free: Yes | Scent: Lightly fragrant Mustela Cradle Cap Bundle Natural Baby Shampoo To clear the cradle cap completely and for lasting protection, you need to use a cradle cap cream along with a shampoo. Instead of buying them separately, we recommend getting this Mustela Baby Cradle Cap Bundle. The unit comes with a foam shampoo and a cradle cap cream. Both products are safe for newborn babies because they are prepared using more than 95% plant-based ingredients. The main ingredient is avocado perseose, which helps improve the skin barrier function. In addition, the shampoo is unscented and tear-free. Both products are free from parabens, phthalate, and phenoxethanol. With this clean and effective cradle cap set, you can achieve a complete cradle cap-free scalp for your baby within a few weeks. Hair Type: All | Key ingredients: Avocado Perseose | Tear-Free: Yes | Sulfate-Free: Yes | Scent: Avocado Pal Mitchell Baby Shampoo Pal Mitchell Baby Don't Cry is another good option you can consider to treat cradle cap. As reported by users, the shampoo makes a noticeable difference to a baby's cradle cap with just a couple of applications. The shampoo also works well to clean and condition the thick and curly hair of toddlers. The shampoo has a pH-neutral formula that gently removes dirt from the scalp and skin. Plus, the tear-free formula gently cleanses the scalp and hair without irritating the eyes. However, it has a pleasant smell that doesn't seem to bother sensitive skin. Since made with mostly naturally derived ingredients, this baby shampoo is suitable for most skin types. Paraben-free, gluten-free, and vegan-friendly ingredients make it a safe choice for conscious parents. As the formula is effective, a little goes a long way. A single bottle will last several months, even after using it daily. Hair Type: Normal | Key ingredients: Caprylyl Glycol, Benzyl Benzoate | Tear-Free: Yes | Sulfate-Free: Yes | Scent: Powderly scent with soft floral and vanilla Conclusion There's no way you can prevent the cradle cap in your baby. However, using the right baby shampoo and brush might keep the cradle cap away. If you are planning for regular use, make sure you are choosing a mild and tear-free shampoo. All the shampoos mentioned earlier have different levels of effectiveness. 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Cappy Medicated Shampoo for Children is the first OTC dandruff shampoo specifically designed for children. It is described as a pediatrician's solution to fight flaking, redness, itching, scaling, and irritation on the scalp and skin. It is said to be safe for kids of all ages. Due to certain products in the shampoo, it cannot be considered tear-free, but it is much safer for the eyes than a traditional adult dandruff shampoo. Back when I first added this to the best cradle cap shampoo list it was a newer shampoo option, but it quickly became a favorite. In fact, I have seen the star ranking increase by several tenths over the years. It only has a small number of low reviews. A few people did write they thought it made the cradle cap worse. Some also felt that it dried up the scalp. I want to add that I have personally tried this shampoo. My son developed cradle cap as an older child and this is the shampoo that I chose for him. It didn't clear all of the cradle cap up right away, but it was gone before the bottle was empty. I think this is partly because it was much harder to scrub cradle cap off of an older kid with lots of hair. I found the shampoo to be of a thicker consistency than most shampoos. This did mean though that it didn't run down the face and get into my son's eyes. The shampoo didn't smell great though. It is listed as having no scent, so it doesn't contain any irritating perfumes, but it didn't leave my hands smelling very good. I also found that after weeks of use, it did seem to dry out my son's hair, so we did add in conditioner on the days we didn't use the cradle cap shampoo. I'm not sure I'd choose this brand if I needed to purchase cradle cap shampoo again, but it did get the job done. Frida Baby Oh Cr*p! Cradle Cap Flake Fixer Scalp Mask | Dandruff Shampoo Cleans Baby's Scalp While Washing Your Baby Frida Baby Oh Cr*p! Cradle Cap Flake Scalp Mask is a highly rated cradle cap shampoo and it is also an 'Amazon Choice' for Popular Brand Pick. It is a good option for babies with sensitive skin because it is hypoallergenic. It is also dermatologist-tested as well as tear-free. It is important to note that while this shampoo is sold on its own it is considered the first step in a 3-step treatment system. I did not find any commenters who wrote that they used this shampoo on its own, but I don't think you'd need to purchase the rest for this to work. Overall the reviews are very positive. A few people did write that they didn't feel that it worked and some felt it bothered their baby's scalp. Overall the biggest complaints I saw were that it didn't smell good. The scent listed is aloe vera. Dentinox Cradle Cap Baby Shampoo 125ml Dentinox Cradle Cap Baby Shampoo is a true cradle cap treatment shampoo, but it is considered gentle enough for regular use. One thing that many of the reviewers listed they liked was the scent of this shampoo which is coconut. Most comments are very positive. Many parents wrote that their little one's cradle cap was gone with only a handful of washes. It is even liked well enough that it has been updated to an 'Amazon Choice' Overall Pick winner. Some commentators were not as happy. This is a medicated treatment shampoo, so it does contain some chemicals. Some parents wrote that their baby cried when this shampoo was applied, and they believed the shampoo caused their baby's pain. Many parents did not think this shampoo caused any pain for their babies though. If you are concerned that it might leave your baby in pain then maybe leave this shampoo to try later if other ones don't work for your infant. So which cradle cap shampoo do Rock-A-Bye Parents Readers find is the best? This one has been the most popular for several years running. BELLA B Healthy Hair & Scalp Baby Cradle Cap Treatment 8 oz - Cradle Cap Treatment For Babies - Baby Conditioner Silky Hair Care - Cradle Cap Treatment For Toddlers - Conditioner For Babies Bella B Bee Gone Cradle Cap Baby Shampoo is ranked 4.5 out of 5 stars on Amazon. It is made from natural and organic ingredients and its purpose is to help soothe your baby's itchy and flaky scalp. The shampoo doesn't state that it is tear-free, but many commentators mention that they have had no issues with that. Reading through the Amazon comments it's easy to see why so many people use this shampoo. It sounds like a miracle product. Review after review is full of positive opinions and notes on how fast it worked. In fact, the only bad review that popped up was one saying that the bottle arrived in bad shape. If I had a baby with cradle cap I think this would be the product that I tried.