

Skin Rash

There are many types of skin rashes and so are their causes and treatment. The treatment will not be helpful if the causes of the rash are not removed.

WHAT ARE SKIN RASHES?

A TEMPORARY ERUPTION ON THE SKIN. THE SKIN WILL BECOME RED DUE TO THE CONGESTION OF THE CAPILLARIES. THESE RASHES COME IN ALL FORMS AND SIZE. SOME OF THEM ARE ITCHY BLISTERS, RAISED BUMPS, FLAT RED BLOTCHES, AND PATCHES OF ROUGH SKIN. A FEW MAY NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION.

COMMON SKIN RASHES

Condition or Illness	Causes	What Rash Looks Like	Skin Areas Affected	Other Symptoms	Self Care
Nappy Rash	Prolonged contact with urine, bowel motion and chemicals	It is red, slightly rough, scaly rash with sharply outlined patches, often with smaller spots out of the main area	Genitals, buttocks, groin and thighs	Irritating, soreness, itching, minor swelling	Remove the causes. Apply anti-inflammatory and anti-fungal preparations. Do not use soap on the nappy rash.
Tinea Pedis	Fungal infection	Cracked, scaling, peeling skin, blisters oozing, crusting, dry skin with cracks and scales white and soggy, thickening and crumbling of the nails scaly, crusty rash	Feet (between the toe webs)	Itching, unpleasant odour, pain and irritation	Antifungal treatment (ask your pharmacist or doctor).
Cradle Cap	Hormones that pass through the placenta before birth, not washing the baby's head often enough, keeping the head covered.	Oily, yellow crust, often red.	Starts behind the ears and spreads to the scalp	Fine, oily scales, irritation.	Wash the head daily with medicated soap. Gently clean off the dandruff and crust. Wrap the head with towels soaked lukewarm water. Uncover the head and expose to the air and sunlight.

Heat Rash (Prickly Heat)	Blocked off sweat glands in heat and dust.	Tiny red pimples, pink blisters on skin	Chest, back, waist, armpits, groin	Itching (may be a result of fever)	Avoid from heat, have a cool shower and apply calamine lotion.
Rubella (German Measles)	Rubella virus (can be prevented with vaccination)	Blotchy flat, pink rash.	Face, neck, body and tender glands.	Infectious from 7 days before rash until 7 days after.	Treat fever with paracetamol. Avoid contact with pregnant women in particular. Plenty of fluid. See your doctor.
Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis)	Allergens (tends to occur in families who have allergies)	Dry, red, inflamed with small and weeping blisters, cracked skin, blisters that ooze and crust over. Sufficient scratching leads to a thickened rough skin	In baby: starts on arms, legs and cheeks; in older children: on neck, wrists, elbows and knees.	Itching (may only itch first, then rash appears hours to days later)	See your doctor for diagnosis and treatment.
Chicken Pox	Herpes zoster virus	First many small, red, itchy spots appear. Turn into little pimples then, form scabs.	Back, chest and abdomen first, then rest of the body	Mild fever 24 hours before rash appears -- intense itching	Treat the fever with paracetamol. If scabs are infected, put gentian violet or an antibiotic ointment on them (ask your doctor or pharmacist)
Psoriasis	Not fully known. May occurs in families.	Thick, rough patches of reddish skin covered with whitish or silver-coloured scales.	Scalp, eyebrows, hands, nails, elbows, knees and buttocks. Can be found in although can occur in any part of the body.	Slight itch	See you doctor if you suspect psoriasis.

Impetigo	Bacterial infection of the skin	Spreading sore with shiny, yellow crusts.	Often in children's faces, especially around the mouth.	Sometimes fever, occasional itching	See your doctor for treatment.
Hives	Allergic reaction to food, viral infection, drugs, insect bites, or other substances	Thick, raised spots or patches that look like bee stings. They may come and go rapidly and move from one spot to another.	Any area	Severe itch, in extreme cases, difficulty in breathing, swelling of throat (may need emergency care)	Bathe in cool water or use cool compress. If itching is severe, take an antihistamine such as chlorpheniramine. See your doctor if the symptoms worsen.

SELF CARE

BEFORE APPLYING ANY TREATMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE REAL CAUSES OF THE RASHES. THIS WILL HELP YOU TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SELF-CARE. BUT YOU ARE ADVISED TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF

- you are unsure of the causes
- the rash is accompanied with fever
- you realize that it covers a large area
- there is any history of skin rashes in the family
- you feel discomfort

- you see it is weeping, bleeding or has pus
- you think it may be infectious
- does not get better within 3 days after you try self care

PREVENTION

Make this your habit if you have sensitive skin

- Wear gloves before washing or doing any housework
- Use a bland soap to wash your clothes and rinse them thoroughly
- Apply barrier cream before working with something wet. (e.g. water, solvent and etc.)
- Wear 100% cotton clothes next to your sensitive skin
- Use an emulsifying ointment or cream instead of soap to clean and moisturize your skin (ask your pharmacist)
- Keep your fingernails short to lessen skin damage from scratching

REFERENCES:

1. Malaysia Healthcare Guide. 1996 edition.

WHERE THERE IS NO DOCTOR, David Werner, 1934, The Hesperian Foundation,
California, U.S.A

Self Care Guide, Pharmaceutical Services Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia
http://www.pharmacy.gov.my/self_care_guide

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