

## DEFINITION

- Yellow scales and crusts attached to the scalp.
- Scales can be greasy or dry.
- Not itchy or painful.
- Begins in the first 2 to 6 weeks of life. Is usually gone by 6 months of age.

## Cause

The cause of cradle cap is unknown. It may be caused by maternal hormones that crossed the placenta before birth and stimulated the oil glands. It is not caused by poor hygiene. Cradle cap is not contagious and does not recur. If redness also occurs behind the ears, in body creases (armpit, groin and neck), and in the diaper area, cradle cap is part of a condition called seborrheic dermatitis.

## Expected Course

Without treatment it can last for months, but it will eventually clear up on its own. With treatment it is usually cleared up in a few weeks.

## HOME CARE

1. **Antidandruff shampoo.** Antidandruff shampoos slow down the scaling and flaking of skin. They do not require a prescription. Your child's antidandruff shampoo is \_\_\_\_\_. Be careful to keep it out of the eyes. Wash your baby's hair with it twice a week. While the hair is lathered, massage your baby's scalp with a soft brush or rough washcloth. Don't worry about hurting the soft spot; it's well protected. Once the cradle cap has cleared up, use a regular shampoo twice a week.
2. **Softening thick crusts or scales.** If your child's scalp is very crusty, put some baby oil or olive oil on the scalp 1 hour before washing to soften the crust. Wash all the oil off, however, or it may worsen the cradle cap.
3. **Resistant cradle cap.** If the rash is red and irritated, apply 1 % hydrocortisone cream (nonprescription) three times a day for 7 days.



## CALL OUR OFFICE

### *During regular hours if*

- The cradle cap lasts more than 2 weeks with treatment.
- It starts to look infected.
- The rash spreads beyond the scalp.
- You have other concerns or questions.