

Self Care Briefing for Clinicians: Cradle Cap (Seborrhoeic Dermatitis- Infants)

Summary

Cradle cap (greasy yellow scaly patches usually on babies' scalps) is harmless and does not usually itch or cause discomfort. It usually appears in babies in the first two months of their lives and clears up without the need for treatment.

Recommendations for clinicians

- Provide the patient with a 'non-prescription' sheet or a patient information leaflet to promote education about self-limiting conditions suitable for self care when appropriate.
- Advise patients of safe and effective self care measures:
 - Regular washing of the scalp with a baby shampoo, followed by gentle brushing with a soft brush to loosen scales and improve the condition of the skin.
 - Softening the scales with baby oil first, followed by gentle brushing, then washing off with baby shampoo.
 - Soaking the crusts overnight with white petroleum jelly or a slightly warmed vegetable or olive oil and shampooing in the morning.
 - If these methods do not achieve softening, a greasy emollient or soap substitute, such as emulsifying ointment, can be used, which helps to remove the scales more easily. Cradle cap shampoos can be purchased over-the-counter.
- Advise patients to seek medical attention and consider treatment with a prescription in the following circumstances, if baby's cradle cap:
 - Itches, swells or bleeds.
 - Spreads to the face or body.

Examples of over-the-counter products available to buy

Please advise patients that suggested prices are, a guide, correct at the time of writing and are subject to change.

- Topical Imidazole cream:
 - Clotrimazole 1% cream: Licensed for children and adults (£5.59 for 20g).
 - Econazole 1% cream: Licensed for children and adults (£5.75 for 30g).
 - Miconazole 2% cream: Licensed for children and adults (£4.29 for 15g).
- Cradle cap shampoos:

- Dentinox® treatment shampoo (£2.15 for 125ml).
- White petroleum jelly:
 - Vaseline ® (£1.50 for 50g)

Further information

- [Selfcare forum](#)
- [NHS.uk](#)
- [Patient UK](#)

Document History

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