



Dr Wolfgang Muller (Consultant Paediatrician)

Parent Information Guide:

Cradle Cap in Babies – Parent Information Leaflet

What is cradle cap?

Cradle cap is the common name for a harmless skin condition called **infantile seborrhoeic dermatitis**. It appears as **greasy, yellowish scales** on a baby's scalp. It often starts in the first few weeks of life and usually clears up on its own within weeks to months.

What does it look like?

- Thick, **yellow or white scales** or crusts on the scalp
- Sometimes extends to **eyebrows, eyelids, behind the ears, or skin folds**
- The skin underneath may look red but is **not itchy or painful**

How can I treat it at home?

1. Gentle scalp care

- Wash your baby's scalp regularly with **mild, unperfumed baby shampoo**
- Use a **soft baby brush** or your fingertips to gently loosen and remove the softened flakes
- Do not pick or scrape the scales

2. Soften the scales first

Before shampooing, apply one of the following oils to the scalp for 30–60 minutes:

-  **Coconut oil**
-  **Sunflower oil**
-  **Unperfumed mineral oil** (e.g. baby oil)
-  **Paraffin-based emollients** (e.g. Epaderm, Hydromol)

 **Avoid olive oil**, as it can damage the skin barrier and may worsen dryness or irritation

 **Avoid nut oils and essential oils** due to allergy risk or irritation



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When to speak to your GP or Health Visitor

- If the cradle cap is **spreading** or becomes **red, inflamed, or weepy**
- If there are signs of **infection** (e.g. crusting, swelling, pus)
- If it doesn't improve after **a few weeks** of home treatment
- If it appears in the **nappy area or skin folds** (could be part of seborrhoeic eczema)

Common myths

Myth	Fact
Cradle cap is due to poor hygiene	 It is not caused by poor hygiene
It is contagious	 It is not infectious and cannot be passed on
You must remove all the scales	 Gentle removal is fine — no need to force it

Need more help?

For more information, visit:

 www.eczema.org – National Eczema Society

 Speak to your **GP, pharmacist, or health visitor**

Enclosed is a link to further parent information:

Parent information on Health Advice children 0–2 years of age:

<https://drwmuller.com/information-for-parents-carers/>

See: My baby

Written by: Dr W Muller

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