

Heat Rash

Definition

- A fine pink rash caused by overheating
- Mainly on the face, neck, chest, and upper back

Health Information

Symptoms

- Tiny, pink bumps. Mainly on the face, neck, chest and upper back.
- Occurs during hot, humid weather or after lots of sun.
- Heat rash can be itchy. Older children may have a "prickly" pins and needles feeling.
- In babies, the rash can have some tiny water blisters.
- No fever or illness.

Cause

- Heat rash is caused by blocked-off sweat glands. Hot, humid weather can cause the sweat glands to be overworked.
- Babies can also get it in the wintertime from ointments put on the skin. Reason: Ointments can block off sweat glands.
- Ointments and Location. Heat rash of the forehead can be caused by oil or ointment on hair. Breastfed babies can get a heat rash on their face from lanolin. The mother may use lanolin on her nipples. A chest heat rash can be caused by menthol ointments put on for coughs.
- Older children can get heat rash with hard exercise.

Prevention of Recurrent Heat Rash

- During hot weather, try to stay cool.
- Lower the temperature in your home if you can.
- Dress in as few layers of clothing as you can.
- During sleep, be sure your child is not overdressed.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Heat rash is caused by blocked-off sweat glands.
- It's common in hot, humid weather.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Cooling:

- Cool off the skin to treat and prevent heat rash.
- For large rashes, give your child a cool bath without soap. Do this for 10 minutes. (Caution: Avoid any chill.) Let the skin air-dry. Do this 3 or more times a day.
- For small rashes, put a cool, wet washcloth on the area. Do this for 5 to 10 minutes. Then let the skin air-dry.
- Dress in as few layers of clothing as you can.
- Lower the temperature in your home if you can.

3. **Sleep:**
 - When your child is asleep, run a fan in the bedroom.
 - During sleep, have your child lie on a cotton towel to absorb sweat. (Note: Only for older children age over 1 year.)
4. **Steroid Cream:**
 - Use 1% hydrocortisone cream. No prescription is needed.
 - Put it on itchy spots 3 times per day.
 - Avoid hydrocortisone ointment.
 - Calamine lotion can also work.
5. **Do Not Use Ointments:**
 - Avoid all ointments or oils on the skin. Reason: They can block off sweat glands.
 - Be sure the rash isn't caused by a menthol ointment. This product is put on the chest for a cough. It can cause a heat rash.
6. **What to Expect:**
 - With treatment, heat rash will clear up in 2 to 3 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Rash lasts more than 3 days on this treatment
- Rash starts to look infected
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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