

Idaho Falls Pediatrics

Itching

What is causing the itching?

If the itching is in just one area (localized) it could have many possible causes including:

- contact dermatitis (skin irritation from a plant, chemicals, fiberglass, detergents, new cosmetic, new jewelry, or other substance)
- fungus (such as athlete's foot, jock itch, or ringworm)
- head lice
- dandruff
- insect bite.

There are many possible causes if your child is itching all over. Some possible causes include:

- dry skin
- eczema
- heat rash
- hives.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Localized itching**

For itching caused by an irritant, wash the area once thoroughly with soap to remove any remaining irritants. Thereafter avoid using soaps on this area. Put cold, moist compresses or ice on the area for 20 minutes every 3 to 4 hours to reduce itching. Follow this with 1% hydrocortisone cream (no prescription needed) 4 times a day. Cut your child's fingernails short and encourage him not to scratch.

Try to figure out what caused the rash and avoid this substance in the future.

For other causes of localized itching, see related topics.

- **Widespread itching**

The following measures may help to relieve itching regardless of the cause:

- Wash the skin once with soap to remove irritants.
- Give your child cool baths with 2q baking soda 4 times a day unless your child has dry skin.
- For very itchy spots, apply 1% hydrocortisone cream (no prescription needed) .
- Encourage your child not to scratch and cut your child's fingernails short.
- Your child should not wear itchy or tight clothes and should temporarily avoid excessive heat, sweating, soaps, and swimming pools.
- For severe itching, may give benadryl every 6 hours.

When should I call Idaho Falls Pediatrics?

Call during office hours if:

- The itching keeps your child from sleeping.
- The itching becomes severe.
- The itching lasts more than 1 week.
- You have other concerns or questions.

*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.