

# natural cures for baby woes

Pinkeye? Cradle cap? Treating your infant's ailments can be as simple as opening your kitchen cabinets. Here, easy solutions for your littlest patient. by [Marygrace Taylor](#)

## CRADLE CAP

**What it is:** Patchy yellowish scales or redness on the scalp during a baby's first three months.

**The natural solution:** Your baby will outgrow cradle cap on her own, so as long as she isn't trying to scratch it, you can forgo treatment, says Alan Greene, M.D., author of *Feeding Baby Green*. If she is starting to rub or scratch at her scalp, however, apply a small amount of olive oil, let it sit for several minutes, and then gently brush away the dry skin.

**See the doctor if:** The patches don't clear up within a few months, develop an odor, or spread.

## FLAT HEAD (PLAGIOCEPHALY)

**What it is:** A flat area that forms on the back or side of the head from repeatedly sleeping in the same position.

**The natural solution:** "This usually starts getting better by age two, when kids start to spend most of the day up and out of that position," Greene says. In the meantime, you can reposition your baby to take pressure off the flattened area by keeping her on her tummy for 30 minutes a day while she's awake.

**See the doctor if:** Your baby shows signs of craniosynostosis, a more serious abnormality of the skull. Symptoms include the absence of a soft spot on the head, a hard ridge in place of the soft spot, or her head seems to grow slower than the rest of her body.

## THRUSH

**What it is:** A yeast infection marked by cottage cheese-like patches in the mouth or on the tongue.

**The natural solution:** "Thrush can be passed back and forth between babies and breastfeeding moms, so it's important to treat both," says Lauren Feder, M.D., author of *Natural Baby and Childcare*. Dissolve  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon plain yogurt in your baby's bottle or rub directly in her mouth. Increase your vitamin C intake (aim for 1,000 mg daily) to prevent yeast growth in your body, and thoroughly clean and disinfect bottles with a water and apple cider vinegar solution.

**See a doctor if:** Symptoms don't clear up within a month or thrush occurs when your baby is over 9 months old.

## BREATH HOLDING (PERIODIC BREATHING)

**What it is:** During the first six months, a baby's respiration rate can be uneven and include 5- to 10-second pauses. The behavior might seem scary, but don't worry—it's something most babies do frequently.

**The natural solution:** "Your baby will correct uneven breathing on her own," Feder says. But if a breath-holding episode is too nerve-racking to wait out (we don't blame you!), you can help your baby regain her rhythm by blowing lightly on her face.

**See the doctor if:** "Ten seconds of breath holding can feel like an eternity, so if you're feeling concerned or your baby is turning blue, call a professional," says Feder.

## PINKEYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS)

**What it is:** With viral conjunctivitis, the white or lower rim of one or both eyes is red and the eyelids are swollen and inflamed. Bacterial conjunctivitis yields redness and swelling too, but the eyes also ooze a yellowish discharge.

**The natural solution:** Wash your baby's eyes with a warm washcloth three times a day, and ease her discomfort with a warm chamomile teabag compress (10 to 15 minutes at a time, three times a day). Bacterial pinkeye is more serious, and needs to be treated with prescription eye-drops. If the drops don't work, then ointment containing antibiotics and steroids may be prescribed, says Feder. Both kinds of pinkeye are highly contagious for three to seven days, so wash your hands thoroughly.

**See the doctor if:** You suspect bacterial conjunctivitis or if viral conjunctivitis symptoms don't clear up within seven days. ●