



# Neonatal Dermatology: Recognizing Benign and Severe Skin Conditions in Newborns

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## DESCRIPTION

One of the most recognizable viral rashes is that associated with measles, which manifests as a red, blotchy rash that usually begins behind the ears and spreads downward. Measles, once a common childhood disease, has become less prevalent due to widespread vaccination. However, outbreaks still occur, particularly in areas with low vaccination rates. The rash in measles is often preceded by symptoms like a high fever, cough, and a runny nose. Another hallmark feature of measles is the presence of Koplik spots, small white lesions on the inside of the mouth, which are key to early diagnosis. Another viral rash that is frequently seen in pediatric populations is the one caused by chickenpox, or varicella. This rash typically starts on the face, scalp, or trunk, with red, itchy spots that develop into fluid-filled blisters. Over time, these blisters rupture and form scabs, progressing through several stages simultaneously. Chickenpox is highly contagious, and while it was once a routine childhood illness, vaccination efforts have significantly reduced its incidence. Despite this, varicella remains a concern for unvaccinated children and certain vulnerable populations. Fifth disease, caused by parvovirus B19, is another viral infection that can lead to a rash in children. The rash often begins on the cheeks, giving the characteristic slapped cheek appearance. It then spreads to the arms, legs, and torso, typically in a lace-like pattern. This infection is generally mild and self-limiting but can cause complications in certain cases, particularly in children with weakened immune systems or those with chronic blood disorders. Hand, foot, and mouth disease, commonly seen in young children, is caused by enteroviruses, most notably coxsackievirus. The rash appears as small, red spots or sores on the hands, feet, and inside the mouth. In addition to the rash,

children may experience a fever, sore throat, and discomfort while eating. While this illness can be uncomfortable, it usually resolves without the need for medical intervention. While most viral rashes in children are self-limited and resolve with supportive care, it's important for healthcare providers to differentiate between various viral exanthems, as certain rashes can signal more serious underlying conditions. For instance, rashes associated with viral haemorrhagic fevers like dengue or Ebola can present similarly but are accompanied by other critical signs, including bleeding or severe organ involvement, requiring immediate medical attention. When assessing a viral rash, clinicians rely on a detailed history, physical examination, and sometimes laboratory tests to pinpoint the virus. It's essential to remember that while the rash itself can be distressing for parents and children, most viral rashes in children are not life-threatening and resolve with minimal treatment. However, timely identification and management are crucial in preventing complications and minimizing the spread of these contagious infections. As such, vaccination remains one of the most effective strategies in reducing the incidence of many viral rashes, including measles, chickenpox, and rubella. In addition to the rash, children may experience a fever, sore throat, and discomfort while eating. While this illness can be uncomfortable, it usually resolves without the need for medical intervention.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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