



Understanding Umbilical Granuloma

What is an umbilical granuloma?

An umbilical granuloma is an overgrowth of tissue during the healing process of the belly button (umbilicus). It usually looks like a soft pink or red lump and often is wet or leaks small amounts of clear or yellow fluid. It is most common in the first few weeks of a baby's life.

The exact cause of this overgrowth is unknown but if left untreated the granuloma can take months to resolve and can cause parental anxiety.

General care of the umbilicus / belly button:

- Keep the belly button clean and dry.
- Cleanse belly button with soap and warm water when it gets soiled with urine or stool.
- Expose the belly button to the air by rolling back the top of the nappy.

What to do if the salt treatment is not effective or an infection is suspected?

If your baby's belly button is showing signs of an infection such as redness of the surrounding skin or possibly having an offensive smell and discharge, or if your baby has a fever, contact your GP for further details on treatment.

How is an umbilical granuloma treated?

Always seek advice first from your health visitor

- If there is an umbilical granuloma and no obvious infection, then your health visitor may suggest a twice daily application of a pinch of table salt treatment. This has been found to be an effective and safe treatment which you can do at home.
- Your health visitor will teach you how to apply a small pinch of salt, then to cover the area with a clean piece of gauze and left for up to 30 minutes. Following this, the salt should be rinsed off with a clean gauze dressing soaked in cooled boiled water.
- Your health visitor will advise you to continue this treatment for at least two days by which time the granuloma should have reduced and started to heal.
- Your health visitor should reassess your baby's belly button in one week.

For additional fact sheets see www.ihv.org.uk