

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.

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.

How is an umbilical granuloma treated?

If there is an umbilical granuloma and no obvious infection, then your GP, paediatrician, midwife or health visitor may suggest salt treatment. This has been found to be an effective and safe treatment which you can do at home.

Occasionally silver nitrate treatment will be suggested. This has to be done by a health professional.

The health professional who advised the treatment can provide you with the gauze swabs needed (or you can buy extras from a pharmacy if needed).

How to do the salt treatment:

- Apply a small pinch of table or cooking salt onto the umbilical granuloma.
- Cover the area with a gauze dressing 'swab' and hold it in place for 10-30 minutes. This may be easiest to do when your baby is asleep.
- Now clean the site using a clean gauze dressing soaked in warm water.
- You should repeat the procedure twice a day for at least two days.

In approximately two or three days you should notice that the granuloma reduces in size, it may change colour, dry off and the area will gradually heal.

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

If the umbilical granuloma does not respond to treatment after one week see your GP, midwife, health visitor or practice nurse. The health professional will consider the need for any further treatment.

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 your baby has a fever contact your GP for further details on treatment.