

The Ultimate in Recycling - Cloth Diapers!

With most new diapers, pins are not necessary so no worries about pricking baby (or yourself) like in the 'old days'. Once you have set up a diapering system, it is a breeze and becomes second nature. Diapers do not need to be pre-soaked. Just dump solids in the toilet and if baby is having loose stools a few good swishes will rinse them out. Two or three loads of laundry a week in the washing machine does the rest!

The Health Issues:

Organic cloth diapers are free of the many chemicals contained in disposable diapers. Disposable diapers contain traces of Dioxin, an extremely toxic by-product of the paper-bleaching process. It is a carcinogenic chemical, listed by the EPA as the most toxic of all cancer-linked chemicals. It is banned in most countries, but not the U.S.

Disposable diapers contain Tributyl-tin (TBT) - a toxic pollutant known to cause hormonal problems in humans and animals. They also contain sodium polyacrylate, a type of super absorbent polymer (SAP), which becomes a gel-like substance when wet. A similar substance had been used in super-absorbency tampons until the early 1980's when it was revealed that the material increased the risk of toxic shock syndrome.

In 2000, the Archives of Disease in Childhood published research showing that scrotal temperature is increased in boys wearing disposable diapers, and that prolonged use of disposable diapers will blunt or completely abolish the physiological testicular cooling mechanism important for normal spermatogenesis.

Many experts have reported that diaper rash happens about the same with both types of diapers. The most common reason for diaper rash is excessive moisture against the skin. Other reasons for rash include food allergies, yeast infections, skin sensitivity, chafing, and chemical irritation. However, diaper rash was almost unheard of before the use of rubber or plastic pants in the 1940's. Most mothers find fewer sores and fungal infections with cloth diapers. Among the reasons are the improved air circulation in the cloth diapers and the lower temperatures. Disposables, being made with plastic and paper, support temperature build up and thus create the ideal climate for microorganisms to grow.

The Environment Issues:

No one knows how long it takes for a disposable diaper to decompose, but it is estimated to be about 250-500 years - long after your children, grandchildren and great, great, great grandchildren will be gone!

Disposable diapers are the third largest single consumer item in landfills, and represent about 4% of solid waste. In a house with a child in diapers, disposables make up 50% of household waste. Environmental experts have estimated that in the U.S. alone 27.4 billion disposable diapers are added to landfills every year.

Disposable diapers generate sixty times more solid waste and use twenty times more raw materials (like crude oil and wood pulp) than cloth diapers. Over 300 pounds of wood, 50 pounds of petroleum feedstocks and 20 pounds of chlorine are used to produce disposable diapers for one baby EACH YEAR.

The production of cotton diapers can be made in a very eco-friendly way when using organic cotton. The use of eco-friendly detergents further reduces the impact on the environment. Our common sense tells us that cloth diapers are the ultimate in recycling because they are used again and again, not entering a landfill until they are nothing but rags.

The Costs:

You have a lot of options available - just look at our diapering page! There are diaper and cover combinations or all in-one-diapers that are as easy as disposables. The initial cost can run from as little as \$350 - \$500 to get started. This is a 'leak-proof' and absorbent diapering system and your baby could be in these diapers until about 30 pounds. Then you will either need to move up to the toddler size or potty train. The estimated cost of disposables you can expect to spend is between \$2800 (for 8,000 diaper changes) and \$3500 (for about 10,000 changes - a more accurate number). This estimate does not include applicable sales tax or even the gas used to drive to the store for those late-night runs for diapers. So for every child who uses disposable diapers, parents will spend roughly between \$3,000 to almost \$4,000. With a cloth diapering system, you could save more than \$3,000!

Unfortunately, when the baby is finished with disposable diapers, they are gone -- poof! You can never use them again. Many parents spend a significant amount of their hard-earned money on trash. That is pretty depressing!

Now I realize that washing cloth diapers cost money too -- just not nearly as much as you think. Washing a load of cloth diapers two to three times per week equals the same amount of water that a young child uses to flush the toilet five times a day. As far as the energy used to wash and dry your diapers, you are looking at spending about \$1.25 each time you wash a load of cloth diapers (including detergent, a rinse cycle and drying). You'll save even more money by drying your diapers on a clothesline. Basically the cost of cloth diapering is about one tenth the cost of disposables!

. . . and The Benefits Just Keep Coming

When your baby is done diapering, you'll have diapers to use all over again! The total cost of buying and using the diapers for three years comes to around \$900, including the cost of washing diapers three times per week. Basically, the cost of cloth diapering is about one tenth the cost of disposables! . . . then they can make excellent dust cloths!

About the Author

Kim McKenna is a mother of two, grandmother of six and owner of AngelBabyOrganic.com. Her online store provides organic products for most all your baby needs (including organic cloth diapers) and also provides valuable information for creating a healthy environment for your baby or grandchild!

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