

Cloth vs. Disposable: Which Are The Best Diapers?

When making the decision on whether you wish to use cloth diapers or the disposable version, new mothers may be confused as to which type is the better choice. Getting some of the basic facts may help you to make the decision that is best for you and your baby.

Diaper rash is the greatest concern for most parents in choosing the right diaper. There are many things that can cause diaper rash. Lack of air circulation as well prolonged wetness against the skin can cause skin irritation. This irritation is the result of bacteria forming ammonia that will interact with urine that is left sitting against the skin and can lead to the growth of microbes. This form of diaper rash is found in both cloth and disposable diapers.

Some infants also may develop allergies to certain soaps, dyes, and chemicals that can lead to diaper rash. This form of diaper rash is found mainly in babies that wear disposable diapers. Concerns with the chemicals sodium polyacrylate (absorbent gel) and dioxin (a result of bleaching paper), and the various dyes used in the making of disposable diapers has caused the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and the FDA (Food & Drug Administration) to become involved in various studies being done in connection with disposable diapers. The EPA has linked sodium polyacrylate to toxic shock syndrome while some dyes and dioxins can lead to central nervous system, kidney, and liver damage. The FDA has received complaints of headaches, dizziness, and rashes being caused by the fragrances found in some disposable diapers.

The United States Consumer Protection Agency has also had a variety of problems reported to them that are directly related to disposable diaper use. Chemical burns as well as noxious odors have been reported as being emitted from certain diaper brands. Other complaints deal with the baby tearing plastic pieces off the diaper and placing them in their mouth or nose. Children have also choked by swallowing tab papers and linings. There have also been reports of the plastic melting on the baby's skin and the baby's skin being stained with ink.

The Journal of Pediatrics has reported that 54% of one-month-old infants using disposable diapers had rashes, with 16% of these being severe cases. In an independent study by a leading diaper manufacturer, diaper rash increased from 7.1% to 61% when the use of disposable diapers was increased.

The cost of cloth diapers as opposed to the disposable type is slightly smaller, though not as much as you would think. The maximum cost of disposable diapers is estimated at \$80 per month, while the cost of cloth diapers is \$60 per month.

The convenience of using disposable diapers used to be greater than when using cloth diapers. That is not the case today. Many cloth diapers come with Velcro tabs so the use of large safety pins has been eliminated. These diapers are also made with several layers of lining to keep your baby drier for a longer period of time.

The choice of which diaper to use is totally up to you. While your baby may do fine with disposable diapers, you have the comfort of knowing that cloth diapers are a healthier and less expensive alternative.

About the Author

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