

GUIDE TO WASHING CLOTH DIAPERS

A BASIC INFORMATION SHEET

PRESENTED BY 2008 MEMBERS OF THE REUSABLE DIAPER MANUFACTURERS GROUP

PREPARING CLOTH DIAPERS FOR FIRST-TIME USE

Natural Fibers (hemp/cotton)

Wash 3-5 times in hot water (120°F/60°C) using proper amount of detergent for the product (see below). This enables the diapers to absorb properly. Dry hot between each wash to ensure shrinkage and proper absorbency.

Polyester Fibers

Wash product once using the proper amount of detergent for the product. Avoid prewashing polyester products with natural fiber products. Dry warm.

Wool Products

Hand wash wool products in lukewarm water with wool wash. Line dry.

NOTE: Once the prewash process is completed, most diapering products (except wool) can be washed together according to the manufacturer's washing recommendations.

WASHING CLOTH DIAPERS

1. Choose the right detergent and know how much to use (read section below).
2. Soaking cloth diapers is unnecessary.
3. Wash soiled diapers every other day.
4. For best results, remove solids from diapers before storing in ventilated pail.
5. Wash cold with correct detergent to remove waste and fight stains.
6. Wash hot (120°F/60°C) to cleanse your diapers.
7. An extra rinse may be required to remove any lingering detergent.
8. Hang dry or tumble dry warm/medium. Hemp or cotton diapers may be dried on hot.
9. Once per month, use up to 1/4 cup bleach or oxygen bleach (check with manufacturer first) in the hot wash cycle (step 6) to sanitize diapers and fight odors.
10. We do not recommend the use of laundry additives (including vinegar and baking soda).

CHOOSING AND USING DETERGENT FOR CLOTH DIAPERS

Some detergent ingredients may coat diaper fabrics, impede absorbency and void product warranties. Check with the product manufacturer before choosing a detergent.

Optimal Detergents

Allen's Naturally Powder /Liquid
Country Save Powder/Liquid
Planet Ultra Powder/Liquid
Planet 2X Ultra
Mountain Green Free & Clear
Mountain Green Free & Clear Baby
Tide Free*

*Use with caution. Contains enzymes, may cause rash or redness.

How Much Detergent

When washing diapers, start by using 1/2 the detergent manufacturer's suggested amount.

To determine the right amount, read the label and then carefully measure.

High Efficiency Considerations

Use an HE detergent.

Set water levels to high to be sure that diapers are cleaned and rinsed properly.

If the weight of the load determines the water level, put a wet towel in with diapers to increase the weight of the load.

Ingredients to Avoid

Natural soaps

Dyes

Perfumes

Enzymes

Softeners

Fabric Enhancers

Optical Brighteners

Troubleshooting Detergent Issues

Watch the second rinse for suds. Suds may indicate that less detergent is necessary. If the diapers smell, slightly increase the detergent and/or increase water level.

References: Sarah Gesiakowski, Pinstripes & Polkadots (www.pinatripesandpolkadots.coal); Washing References From Cloth Diaper Manufacturers; The Great Detergent Debate, 2008 members of the Reusable Diaper Manufacturers Group;

Disclaimer: This information is offered as a public service and is not intended to be a complete resource. Information is current as of September 2008 and will be reviewed again in February 2009. Information is subject to change. Keep in mind that detergent manufacturers change their formulas without notice. Washing machines vary in capacity and water usage. Water types vary by region. With issues not solved by the information above, contact the product manufacturer for further instructions.