



## VERY SIMPLE METHOD FOR WASHING CLOTH DIAPERS!

### 1. A note about washing machines

Top loaders are great for washing cloth diapers!

High efficiency front loading machines are great because they don't use much water, but they can cause a big problem because of that too. Not using enough water to wash and rinse your diapers can cause serious residue problems. Please see our info sheet on residues for further information.

Set your machine manually to maximum water level to wash your diapers. If this is impossible, call the manufacturer and ask them how to adjust your water level manually. If it is still impossible, use the wet towel trick! Reduce the number of diapers per load and add a wet towel or two to trick the machine into adding more water.

Multiple rinses are not necessary if you are using enough water to wash and rinse your diapers clean.

### 2. Before You Start Using Your Diapers – Very Important!

Wash diapers in hot water with a small amount of zero residue detergent before first use in order to make them absorbent. If your diapers are made of unbleached cotton, bamboo or hemp, you will need to wash and dry them at least three times to remove natural oils and waxes that will inhibit absorption.

Test your diapers for absorbency before you use them! If your diapers are made of natural fabrics, you can test their absorbency by pouring a small amount of warm water onto the fabric. It should be absorbed immediately. If your diapers have any sort of 'stay dry' synthetic layer, you will have to apply light pressure before liquid absorbs. If the water beads on your diapers, they are not ready to use! If your cotton diapers do not absorb properly after 3 washes and your synthetic diapers after 1 wash, please refer back to the previous "note about washing machines", as you probably need to increase the water level in your washing machine.

*Please check the washing instructions for the specific product you have purchased as they may be different.*

### 3. What To Do With Dirty Diapers

Remove diaper and diaper cover from baby. Flush away flushable liner or shake off excess poop into the toilet. If your baby is exclusively breastfed, there is no need to shake excess poop into the toilet as it will wash out easily.

Unfold your diapers to ensure thorough cleaning and remove liners or inserts. Secure velcro type tabs by sticking them to the fold back tabs (on the inside back of the diaper cover or diaper).

Put wet or soiled diapers in a pail or a hanging diaper bag. Dirty diaper covers can be stored with your dirty diapers (never soak them!). Wash every 2-3 days. Polyester diaper covers can be washed with your diapers; nylon and wool diaper covers should be washed separately.

### 4. Washing Diapers

- First run a cold pre-wash (or a short cycle with no detergent).
- Then do a regular wash in hot water (60C/140F max) Do not use a sanitize cycle on any products with velcro type closures or elastic. See detergent information below please!
- Rinse diapers in lots of water to avoid build-up of detergent, bacteria and urine.
- Dry in the dryer or outside on a clothesline (check the label of your product, as some products should only be hung to dry). Sunlight is a natural brightener and disinfectant!
- **Once washed, your diapers should not smell like urine or detergent!** If they do, chances are you have a residue problem. Please see our info sheet on residues!

## 5. Detergent

We recommend using a zero residue detergent! If you have a top loader, you can use the full recommended amount of a zero residue detergent. If you have a front loader or HE machine, stick to the lower end of the recommended amount of detergent.

If you are using anything other than a zero residue detergent, use maximum half of what the detergent package tells you to use and one quarter of the recommended amount if you have a front loader or HE machine.

Choose a detergent that does not contain any of the following additives, as they can create residue problems. Detergent residue will lead to leaking, absorbency issues and stinky covers.

- Fabric softeners
- Natural oils
- Perfumes
- Dyes
- UV brighteners
- Stain guard ingredients
- Enzymes (they will not affect performance, but may cause rashes on some babies' skin)

Please be cautious about using vinegar and/or baking soda, as they can together or individually cause problems with some diapering products. We recommend that you do not use either of these unless specifically suggested by the manufacturer of your diaper or diaper cover.

### We recommend the following washing products:

- Sensi-Clean and Sport-Wash ([www.atsko.com](http://www.atsko.com))
- Charlie's Soap ([www.charliesoap.com](http://www.charliesoap.com))
- Country Save ([www.countrysave.com](http://www.countrysave.com))
- Allen's Naturally ([www.allensnaturally.com](http://www.allensnaturally.com))
- Mountain Green Baby Free & Clear ([www.mountaingreen.biz](http://www.mountaingreen.biz))
- Seventh Generation Delicate Care ([www.seventhgeneration.com](http://www.seventhgeneration.com))\*
- Nature Clean Powder or Liquid ([www.naturecleanliving.com](http://www.naturecleanliving.com)) \*
- Claudia's Choices ([www.claudiaschoices.ca](http://www.claudiaschoices.ca)) \*
- Wonder Wash ([www.wonderwash.net](http://www.wonderwash.net)) \*

A bleach alternative can be used on an occasional basis for stain removal. It should contain no ingredients beyond sodium carbonate or sodium percarbonate.

### We recommend the following bleach alternatives:

- Oxy-Boost Oxygen Bleach ([www.oxyboost.com](http://www.oxyboost.com))
- Nature Clean Oxygen Bleach ([www.naturecleanliving.com](http://www.naturecleanliving.com)) \*
- BioVert Oxygen Bleach ([www.prolav.com](http://www.prolav.com)) \*

\*easy to find in Canada

**NOTE: If you live outside North America, or if you want the most up-to-date information we have on detergents, please visit [www.bummi.com](http://www.bummi.com)**



cloth diapering

## Detergent Information

This list was put together based on feedback from our customers and suppliers. We are not detergent experts, and this list is by no means definitive- it is meant as a resource only. Since ingredient lists for detergents are not always readily available, we erred on the side of caution and have not recommended detergents with unknown ingredients.

Many factors can lead to a detergent giving you a residue problem –differences in water quality, washing machines and the ratio of water to detergent. Some detergents with additives can cause problems for one family, but pose no issues for the next. Because of this, your safest bet is to stick with a detergent that is zero-residue. That said, keep in mind, that most detergents when used in **moderation** will not cause a residue problem.

Whichever detergent you choose to use, make sure to use a reasonable quantity. If using a zero-residue detergent, stick to the lower end of the amount recommended on the package. If you are using anything other than a zero-residue detergent, use about 1/2 of what the manufacturer recommends in a top loading washing machine, and reduce to ¼ for a front loader or HE machine. This will give you enough detergent to clean properly but not enough to create a residue. Make sure your diapers are being rinsed well in plenty of water. Check out our washing guide for more information.

PRODUCT		WHY NOT / USEFUL INFO
Ace Powder	NO	Enzymes
AJAX All-Purpose powder	NO	Brighteners
All Free and Clear	NO	Anti-allergens/brighteners
All Baby	NO	Brighteners
All w/stain lifters	NO	Full of extra ingredients
<b>Allen's Naturally liquid/powder</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Arm & Hammer liquid laundry detergent essentials	MAYBE	There are natural oils. Should be fine if used in moderation.
Arm & Hammer Fabric Care	NO	Full of extra ingredients.
Arm & Hammer Sensitive Skin Perfume Free and Dye Free	NO	Brighteners
Attitude Fragrance Free	MAYBE	Complete ingredient list unavailable
Bi-O-Kleen All Temperature liquid/powder	MAYBE	Reports of repellency issues with pocket diapers - perhaps caused by natural extracts or degreasers.
Bi-O-Kleen laundry liquid	MAYBE	Reports of repellency issues with pocket diapers – perhaps caused by natural extracts or degreasers.
Bi-O-Kleen Premium Plus All Temperature Powder	NO	Enzymes
Biovert Detergent	NO	Some reports of residue
Biovert Stain Remover	YES	Low additive oxygen bleach
Cheer/Cheer Free	NO	Enzymes and brighteners
<b>Charlie's Soap</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>The liquid leaves zero residue and is cost effective. The powder has not been tested.</b>
<b>Claudia's Choices</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Zero residue</b>
Country Save Liquid	MAYBE	Has not been tested for use with diapers
<b>Country Save Powder</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Certified non residue by manufacturer</b>
Dreft	NO	Enzymes and brighteners
Earth Friendly Products Baby Hypoallergenic	NO	Soy Softener
Ecos Free & Clear	MAYBE	Some reports of residue in hard water conditions
Ecos w/ soy softener	NO	Fabric softener

Ecover	NO	Some reports of residue
Envirorite	NO	Complete ingredient list unavailable
Era	NO	Enzymes, brighteners
Fab	NO	Complete ingredient list unavailable.
Fresh Start	NO	Complete ingredient list unavailable.
Gain w/bleach	NO	Enzymes
Ivory Snow liquid/powder	NO	Enzymes
Jewel Ultra Original	NO	Enzymes
<b>Hydrox</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Safe bleach alternative if used in moderation</b>
Kirklands Signature	NO	Brighteners
<b>La Parisienne – Delicate Care; Dye &amp; Perfume Free</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Lemieux	NO	Oily softener could leave residue
Method	NO	Enzymes, brighteners
Mountain Green Ultra, Skin Sensitive, Baby	MAYBE	Recommended by many users but does contain natural oils
<b>Mountain Green Baby Free &amp; Clear</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Mrs. Meyer's	NO	Enzymes
<b>Nature Clean Regular</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Powder and liquid are OK</b>
Nature Clean 3x Concentrate	MAYBE	Contains bicarbonate of soda which may not be suitable for some delicate fibre products (eg. Bamboozle)
<b>Nellie's</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Omaiki	MAYBE	Complete ingredient list unavailable
<b>Oxyboost</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Oxygenated bleach with no other additives</b>
Oxi-clean	NO	Complete ingredient list unavailable
Oxi-Prime powder	MAYBE	Has oxygenated bleach in formula
Parisienne	NO	Complete ingredient list unavailable
Planet Delicate Laundry Wash, Hypo-allergenic	MAYBE	Recommended by many but no evidence as to zero residue
Planet Ultra, Powdered Hypo-allergenic	MAYBE	Recommended by many but no evidence as to zero residue
Presidents Choice 2x Ultra	NO	Enzymes
Presidents Choice Green Coldwater	NO	Complete ingredient list unavailable
Purex, Purex Free & Clear, Purex Baby	NO	Brighteners
<b>Rockin' Green Cloth Diaper Detergent</b>	<b>YES</b>	
SA8	NO	Brighteners, enzymes
Sears Ultra Concentrated, powder	NO	Enzymes
<b>Sensi-Clean (Sportwash)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Confirmed zero residue by the manufacturer</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> Generation liquid, Baby	NO	Enzymes
7 <sup>th</sup> Generation powder	NO	Enzymes
7 <sup>th</sup> Generation Free & Clear	NO	Enzymes.
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Generation Delicate Care</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Shaklee liquid	NO	Enzymes
Soap Nuts	NO	Not enough information available
Souris Verte	MAYBE	Complete ingredient list unavailable
Sun, Sun Free	NO	Brighteners, enzymes
Sunlight Sensitive	NO	Brighteners
Target Baby, powder	NO	Enzymes
Tide	NO	Brighteners, enzymes
Tide Free (Tide Nature)	NO	Enzymes
Trader Joe's Cleanliness Next to Godliness	NO	Brighteners, soy
<b>Watkins Laundry Detergent (powder)</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Watkins Laundry Detergent (liquid)	NO	Soy based fabric softeners
Wisk, Wisk Free Clear	NO	Brighteners
<b>Wonder Wash</b>	<b>YES</b>	
Woolite	MAYBE	Complete ingredient list unavailable
XTRA	NO	Brighteners

We believe that residues are now the single most important issue in troubleshooting problems with cloth diaper users. We would like to explain to you what residues are and how to avoid them - and also how to resolve them if your diapers do develop a residue problem.

If your diaper covers are leaking or wicking or if your diapers are not absorbing properly and are causing leaky messes, your diapering products are probably not worn out or defective. Most likely they actually have a residue problem which can be resolved.

The same is true in the case of smelly diapering products. Some people believe that certain diapering products are just plain smelly – not true! Clean diapers and covers should never smell like detergent or ammonia! If they do – then most likely you are using too much detergent and/or have a urine residue problem which can be solved.

### How do I know if I have a residue?

- Stinky diapers and/or diaper covers
- Discoloured diapers (in the case of synthetic fabrics) or diaper covers
- Non-absorbing diapers
- Leaking diaper covers
- Diaper rash

### What causes residue?

- Too much detergent
- Using a detergent with additives (see list below)
- Not using enough water to wash with
- Not using enough detergent
- Dryer sheets (even if used only in your regular laundry)

### Are some fabrics more likely to develop residue?

Yes! Diapering fabrics made from polyester: PUL, suede cloth, fleece, etc. are more likely to develop residue problems than natural fibres.

### I think my diaper and/or diaper covers have a residue problem! What can I do?

We will tell you how to solve your residue problem (see below), *but the most important thing is to find out what is causing it so that you can change your washing routine in order to avoid having the same problem again!*

## DETERGENT RESIDUES

Detergent residue is a film left on fabric by detergent. It can build up on any items that you wash - clothes, bedding, etc. Usually you will notice it only when you have residue on a product that is supposed to be absorbent or waterproof – like diapers and diaper covers!

You can see the signs of detergent residue right away if your diapers and covers are washed with way too much detergent – but more commonly it will take a couple of months before you have any problems. You may even find that one of your covers develops problems before the rest.

**Here are the problems you may see:**

1. Leaking and wicking onto babies' clothing
2. Repelling liquid (beading)
3. Stinky diapers or covers
4. Skin rashes
5. Yellowing or dinginess of white fabrics

**Why do you have this problem?**

1. **You may be using too much detergent.** If you are using the correct amount of detergent for the size of load you are washing but if there is not enough water in your machine, it will be too much detergent.
2. **Or you may be using a detergent with additives that leave residue in the fibres.** Detergent companies put additives into their formulas in order to attract us with cleaner, brighter, whiter, softer, etc. promises. This can cause problems for people with sensitive skin as well as causing residue on your laundry. Below is a brief outline of what to watch out for when you shop for detergents.

**Fabric Softeners** are usually clearly marked on detergent packaging, thus easy to avoid. They will cause wicking and repelling of liquid on most fabrics.

**Optical Brighteners** are added to many detergents. Words like "brighter," "whiter," or "cleaner" on packaging are signs that a detergent might include them. Optical brighteners (also called optical bleaches or fluorescent whitening agents) are fluorescent chemicals that absorb ultraviolet light and emit back visible blue light. This gives the impression that clothes are brighter and cleaner – but these particles can build up on fabric causing leaking and wicking and sometimes eye or skin irritations.

Optical brighteners have also been identified as being toxic to fish and other aquatic life – and some are even capable of causing mutations in bacteria. In addition, they are very slow to biodegrade. So far, science does not know the full impact of their presence in our environment, and how they affect animal health ...

**Stain Guards** are usually easy to spot in detergents, since brands use them as a selling point. Phrases to look out for on packaging are "stain repelling" or "stain protection." Stain guards will coat fibres.

**Natural Additives** usually show up in detergents in the form of oils. Like chemical additives, they do not always cause a problem- but with time, natural oils can build up and lead to wicking, leaking and repelling of liquids. Examples include orange oil, citrus extract, and grape seed extract.

**Soaps** are naturally derived (this is what sets them apart from detergents) and can react with the minerals in water to create a film on whatever you wash. This film can leave a residue and turn clothes grey. Castile soap is an example of a natural soap that can cause a residue problem.

**Detergent residues can easily be solved!**

If the residue is not too extensive, you can usually get rid of it by doing several hot water washes with no detergent, then throwing the diapers and covers in the dryer. **Make sure you are washing with enough hot water!!!** If you cannot adjust your machine manually to the highest water level, call the manufacturer. If they cannot instruct you on how to adjust the water level to the highest water level, use the wet towel trick! Decrease the number of diapers you wash per load, and add wet towels to your load in order to trick your machine into adding more water.

**Multiple rinses will not work** – you must increase the level of water used to wash and rinse your diapers.

Check your diapers for absorbency by pouring a small amount of warm water onto your diaper. Remember to apply slight pressure if your diaper has a synthetic interior. If your diaper still does not absorb properly, or if your diaper smells like detergent or ammonia, please call our customer service department at 1-888-828-6647. We would be happy to help you sort it out.

## URINE RESIDUES

As more and more people replace their washing machines with high efficiency front loader models, we have seen more of this type of residue

Your diapers should smell clean after they are washed. If they smell like urine, then it is clear that they have a urine residue. If they smell clean after they are washed and then like ammonia after the first pee, then it is probable that they have a urine residue.

### How do I know I have a urine residue?

- Strong odour of ammonia
- Bad diaper rash

### Where does the "stink" come from?

When a wet diaper smells really bad, it is most likely due to an overproduction of ammonia. In the body, ammonia is converted to urea and excreted. Once the urine is released, the urea begins converting back to ammonia, so some ammonia smell is perfectly normal.

Lingering urea in the diaper and certain types of bacteria can speed up and increase the production of ammonia. So if you smell an unusually strong odour of ammonia after your baby pees, you most likely have a biological residue in your diaper.

This residue is most commonly caused by not using enough water to wash and rinse diapers clean. It can also be caused by not using enough detergent. Detergent is what enables water to enter the fibres of the cloth and release its soil (by decreasing the surface tension of the water). If there is too little water (or detergent), the urine is diluted, but not rinsed away. It is recycled in the wash and dries onto the fabric, remaining there in the form of residues.

### Why does my baby have a rash every time I put them in cloth diapers?

You should definitely suspect a urine residue. Ammonia in the diaper will burn tender baby skin!

## Urine residues can easily be solved!

If the residue is not too extensive, you can usually get rid of it by doing several hot water washes with no detergent, then throwing the diapers and covers in the dryer. **Make sure you are washing with enough hot water!!!** If you cannot adjust your machine manually to the highest water level, call the manufacturer. If they cannot instruct you on how to adjust the water level to the highest water level, use the wet towel trick! Decrease the number of diapers you wash per load, and add wet towels to your load in order to trick your machine into adding more water.

**Multiple rinses will not work** – you must increase the level of water used to wash and rinse your diapers.

If your diaper still smells like ammonia, please call our customer service department at 1-888-828-6647. We would be happy to help you sort it out.

## TIPS

Take some time to get accustomed to your new diapering system, and don't be afraid to play around with folding, stuffing and fastening, etc.

If you are making the switch to cloth diapers from disposable diapers, mixing your cloth diapering system with disposables in the beginning (for outings or overnight) can make this transition easier. Most parents find that using and washing cloth diapers is easier than they thought it would be, and quickly become avid full time users.

And if you are starting with a newborn baby, don't be afraid to dive in full time with cloth diapers. It is pretty easy and you will get the routine down fast.

By the way, you may find that you will need to acquire baby clothes that can accommodate larger bums!

### Important Reminders!

- Using a **diaper cream**? Please protect your diaper with a liner! We recommend not using ointments with petroleum, fish oils or zinc.
- **Runny newborn poop**? If using prefolds, use the fan fold. And don't be afraid to try out the bikini twist! It may take a few tries to master it – but it works really well for runny poop. A Bio-Soft liner can also help to absorb runny poop.
- Be sure the diaper cover is **fastened snugly** enough so that it fits well and does not sag. Saggy diapers will leak! You will need to be especially careful to pay attention to this when your baby starts to walk!
- **Reduce drying time** by doing an extra spin cycle and/or throwing a dry towel or dryer balls into the dryer with your diapers.
- Don't use **dryer sheets**, even in your regular laundry – they will leave a stubborn residue on everything you dry in your dryer!
- Dry your diapers occasionally in the **sun** – it brightens and disinfects.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### Leaking problems?

#### Level 1

- **Check the important reminders above**
- Did you **pre-wash** your diapers and **test for absorbance**?
- Do you have the proper **size** of diaper and/or cover for your baby?
- Does the cover **fit snugly** around baby's legs and belly? Is it fastened tightly enough to create a proper fit?
- If using a **2 part system**, make sure that diaper and liner are completely contained inside the waterproof cover. Any bit of diaper left outside of the waterproof cover can cause leaking.
- Don't tuck your diaper into that **front flap** on the inside of the diaper cover - it is meant to prevent leaking through the sewing line!

## Level 2

- Is there leaking straight through the fabric of the diaper cover? Is the suede cloth on your synthetic diapers repelling moisture completely? Unless you are using diaper creams without a liner, then you have a **detergent residue problem**. This is caused by:
  1. not using enough hot water to wash and rinse or
  2. using too much detergent or
  3. using a detergent with additives

**Please see our info sheet on residues!**

- Are you **changing your baby's diaper** often enough? Newborns need to be changed about every 2 hours! A huge advantage of using cloth diapers is that you know when your baby's diaper is wet, so you change their diaper more often.
- Is your baby going through a **growth spurt** or sleeping more soundly at night? If so, you may need to add a diaper doubler or liner for increased absorbency.
- Are you reaching the limit of the diaper's **size range**? If so, you may need to add a diaper doubler or liner for increased absorbency.

## Smelly Diapers or Diaper Covers?

**Once washed, your diapers should not smell like urine or detergent!**

- If they smell of **detergent**, wash them again in plenty of hot water and **less detergent**.
- If they smell like **ammonia** once your baby wets them, make sure that you are using **enough hot water** and **enough detergent**.
- Do your **diapers smell** clean when washed, but utterly horrible after the first pee? This could mean that urine residue is trapped within the fibres of your diapers, and this is always related to washing and rinsing without enough hot water. Urine residue can also lead to diaper rashes. You probably need to adjust the water level in your machine or "trick" your HE machine to increase the water level by adding one or two wet towels. Do not overstuff your machine – wash fewer diapers at a time.
- Are your diapers and diaper covers **stinky or discoloured**? Then it is pretty clear that you have a detergent residue problem!

**Please see our info sheet on residues! You will have to get rid of the residue problem and adjust your washing routine to ensure that it does not happen again.**

## Does Your Baby Have a Recurring Rash in Cloth Diapers?

Please suspect a residue. Your baby will react to a urine residue in the diaper fabric. Some babies are also very sensitive to detergent residues. If your baby is rashy and your diapers are discoloured or smelly – please take action to resolve your residue problem. **See our info sheet on residues!**

**Remember that customer service is our passion and call us if you have questions!  
1-888-828-6647. We would love to help you find a solution.**