

I want to cloth diaper but.....

Talking to other parents in real life or online, the response I often hear is “I want to cloth diaper but...” fill in the blank. There are obvious hurdles to beginning cloth diapering. This is an attempt to dispel some of those potential road blocks.

... I don't want to prick my baby with pins.”

Although some parents still use (and love) pins, modern cloth diapers fasten in a variety of ways: Velcro, snaps, ties, plastic “s” hooks, and an alternative to the pin- a Snappi.

... I don't want my baby to get too hot in plastic pants.”

The waterproof material for cloth diapers is far from vinyl or plastic! Polyurethane Laminate (PUL) is a breathable yet impermeable waterproof barrier used for diaper covers. This material is also used in Pocket Diapers, All in Ones, and various other modern cloth diapers. In addition, fleece is an alternative for babies with sensitive skin. Fleece is waterproof and can be worn as a diaper cover, or used to make pocket diapers. Wool is another option. Although expensive and intimidating, it is an amazing solution to keep your baby dry overnight. The lanolin in wool (along with an extra lanolizing process at home) makes it waterproof.

... I don't want to deal with the mess.”

Fact: all babies and toddlers are messy. Saying you don't want to use cloth diapers because it is “messy” is laughable since every day you are faced with chunky spit up, poop explosions (which usually do not happen in cloth btw), drool, and messy food fights. The only difference between cloth and disposables is that you dump the solid waste in the toilet. This can be done a number of ways, including shaking, scraping with toilet paper, and using a handy diaper sprayer. Your hands don't need to touch poop!

... I don't have the time to wash diapers!”

Who does??? Or other clothes for that matter! Washing diapers is something that gets added into your routine. In total, washing diapers takes less than 10 minutes of actual effort. The washer and dryer (or the SUN!!!!!!) do all the heavy lifting! And to put away diapers takes all of 5-10 minutes, including stuffing them. I much prefer cloth diaper laundry to regular; it is easier, and if I let it sit in the washer or dryer a few hours, it doesn't matter!

... It sounds way harder than disposables.”

What seems hard in the beginning just takes a little research. Changing the diapers isn't hard, it is picking one. It is true! There are many more varieties of cloth diapers than disposables. Once you have an idea of what will work best for your family, you just need to find them. When you are done with your own diapers you can resell them. Cloth diapers hold their value very well, and you can sell yours and recoup 50-90% of your investment in most cases! Try selling your disposables back to Target. Yeah.... didn't think so!

... I heard they smell.”

Ok, sometimes the stink might build up. Imagine what is going into those diapers. Yep. Not pretty. That is why finding a detergent that works for you is very important. Washing cloth diapers might take some getting used to. Then when you find your routine hopefully the smell will never build up or return. However it is important to note that you can wash these diapers every 2-3 days and the smell is usually contained within a pail or wet bag. With disposables, the used diapers, especially those containing poop (technically you can and SHOULD still remove solid waste and flush it from disposable diapers however the fact is most people do not), start to smell and can really stink up a room. With cloth diapers you never have stinky poop sitting in a pail since it is put into a toilet and flushed away!

... I am afraid they will leak more than a disposable.”

Disposables use super absorbent polymer (SAP) gel, which can hold a ridiculous amount of liquid. It is too good to be true. That gel is also toxic and if exposed to skin or ingested can have terrible results. I have heard of two dogs that died from eating a disposable diaper. Cloth diapers rely on a variety of materials to absorb wetness: cotton, bamboo, hemp, microfiber and micro terry. These all vary in how much they can hold. Hemp is the most absorbent, but I have had

success with them all. The main point is, they hold urine. Depending on how often your baby pees and how much, you might change more than a disposable. If you are having leaks, it could be due to a washing problem

... “I can’t afford it.”

It is true that even the most expensive cloth diapers will save you money in the long run. Long run being the key word. Disposables are a constant expense that is spread out equally over the years your baby wears them. **Truth is- you can’t afford NOT to use cloth diapers.**

... No one I know uses them. I am afraid of how people will react.”

No one I knew in real life used cloth diapers either, when I started. But a few people ended up converting just after seeing my diapers and talking with me about how easy it can be. You can be your baby’s advocate. If people tell you cloth diapers are bad for your baby, explain that in fact, they are better because they have no chemicals in them. If they laugh and say something about how long that will last, be the bigger person and do as you wish. Use them for however long you like. As long as your baby is happy and you are happy, who cares? Be a trendsetter! I guarantee you will have the numbers of moms using cloth rise. We multiply! Oh, and don’t be surprised if you are treated like a hero if you are caught changing your baby into a cloth diaper in public. An ego booster for sure! Plus, there is a huge online community of support in the form of message boards, blogs, websites, and Twitter. These are great for getting your questions answered if you have a problem.

...I don’t want my baby to be wet or uncomfortable.”

Would you want to wear paper underwear? Your baby probably doesn’t either. Cloth diapers are available with liners that wick away moisture, like suede cloth and micro fleece. Unfortunately, a small percentage of babies have an allergy to one or both of those materials, but this is rare. Other parents prefer organic fibers to touch their baby like cotton and super soft bamboo.

... I have multiple children in diapers.”

That is all the more reason to use cloth diapers! Imagine never running out of diapers and having to run to the store last minute, lugging 2 babies inside. Using one size diapers give you some flexibility to change the sizes to fit two different babies. And you can still wash with the same frequency, just larger loads. Easy as pie!

... My baby is in daycare, so I can’t.”

This is a tough one. Unfortunately, many daycares do not allow cloth diapers. Those that do often want you to have easy to use diapers with Velcro that are all one piece. These are the more expensive diapers as well. Simply showing how to use a modern cloth diaper may change their mind, as well as providing your own wet bag for the dirty diapers. You may also want to let the care provider leave any solid waste in the diaper for you to dump out later. Even if your daycare won’t use them, there is no rule stating it is all or nothing. Use cloth when you can.

...my husband/ SO doesn’t want to.”

Husbands can be the hardest ones to convince. Show them how much money you would save, and explain the benefits to your baby and the planet. You can also let them know that not having bags of stinking diapers to take out means less garbage duty for him. Show him a modern diaper and how easy it is to change. He may just need a visual. Or, do it anyway. He will come around!

...won’t it make my baby’s clothes not fit?”

There are some very trim cloth diapers out there. And even some of the fluffier ones have little impact on your baby’s pant size. If you are worried their butt will be so big you have to move up to the next size, which will be too long, I doubt it, but anything is possible. Conversely, if your child is a skinny minny cloth actually helps pants fit better! Bonus: cloth diapers cushion the booty as toddlers begin learning to walk.

...my baby is too old.”

Late bloomers need not worry. It is never too late to start. By starting late you avoid newborn cloth diapering, and can skip to a one size diaper or a size Medium or Large right away. Most children are in Mediums the longest, and some never even wear a large. And if you plan on having more children the diapers you buy will still get plenty of miles. You can also resell your diapers when finished with them.

...how will I travel?”

Very sneakily! I have snuck my cloth diapers onto flights by stuffing my car seat and car seat bag (which check for free!) with a bag of cloth diapers. Don't want to travel with cloth diapers? No one is holding a gun to your head. I typically do, but there have been times I couldn't. I wouldn't hate disposables so much if they were used in situations like traveling only. In fact, that is why they were invented! To allow mothers to leave the house with ease. Back then the diapers were larger and harder to travel with too.

...I don't own a washer and dryer.”

Ouch. That is important. It is possible to hand wash or use a Laundromat, but it is understandably more difficult.

...I have terrible memories of cloth diapers as a kid.”

Believe it or not I have seen this excuse quite a few times. Since the old cloth diapers were heavy fabric rectangles, relied on pins, and used plastic covers, many people have bad memories. Not to mention, they recall their mothers washing them or bleaching the crap out of them, which left a noxious odor and lingering sense memory. Even when I say they have changed and people no longer use wet pails (for the most part) the bad taste in their mouth is hard to overcome. If this is you, I assure you that washing and changing cloth diapers is nothing like the old days. NO scrubbing or dunking and swishing diapers in the toilet. There are more modern methods.

...I don't want to be one of those 'Crunchy' parents.”

Cloth diapering is not reserved for tree-hugging, granola eating, Birkenstock wearing hippies. All kinds of parents use cloth diapers for all kinds of reasons. Being crunchy doesn't even mean you have to use cloth and using cloth diapers doesn't automatically put you into the "crunchy" category (although it often leads to a change in lifestyle choices as a gateway drug to crunch). Techie parents, yuppies, poor, rich, middle class, famous, nerdy, frugal, and trendy parents have all used cloth diapers.

...I actually don't want to!”

Well then, why are you here? But seriously, no one is making you. I do want to see more parents using cloth, but it just isn't meant for everyone. As long as your baby is happy and safe, that is all that matters.

***Article courtesy of www.dirtydiaperlaundry.com