

Benefits of Cloth Diapering

Interested in giving cloth diapering a try? Good for you (and your little one(s)!)

Cloth diapers dramatically cut down on diapering expense, free up tons of space in our landfills, they're healthier for your baby, and chances are potty training will go much quicker!

Most people are not fond of daily dealings with diaper full after diaper full~ which explains why disposables have become a multi-million dollar business. However, cloth diapers are making a comeback with some really convenient and effective designs. The fold-and-pin variety of diapering system that many people are used to still exists, but new all-in-one cloth and cover designs are popping up everywhere. Velcro and snaps have replaced sharp pins and the diapers are fitted with elastic around the waist and legs to hold in contents. A few people are turned off by the cost of each diaper- which can run anywhere from \$5 to over \$20 a dipe. While I understand that the initial cost can be a distraction, doing the math for the entire length that your little one will be in diapers instantly turns that frown upside down;). After trying several when my daughter was first born, I settled on buying only 6 'Bum-ware' all-in-one diapers. These were the most incredible diapers~ I paid a total of \$132 (plus I continued using a few of the 'trial diapers' mentioned above.) They lasted through 2 children. It costs, on average, about \$1,600 to diaper one child for two years in disposable diapers- about \$66 a month. Many children are in diapers for longer than two years. That comparison is a no-brainer.

Varieties of rash creams are staple on store shelves and on

baby~shower lists. I don't know of many parents who even have to invest in these products while using cloth diapers. True, rashes may develop from constant wetness against the skin...but, deeper thinking into what disposable diapers are made of leaves any inquisitive person wondering...

Both of my children are past the diapering years, and while I was intuitively drawn to cloth diapering without much further investigation, I never looked much into the chemicals that disposables contain. It didn't take much searching to track down a few: first on the list: traces of dioxin. Dioxin is an extremely toxic by-product of the paper-bleaching process. It is listed by the EPA as the most toxic of all cancer-linked chemicals. It is banned in most countries...yet, is in full swing here in the U.S.. Disposable diapers contain Tributyltin (TBT)- a toxic pollutant known to cause hormonal problems in humans and other animals. And, lastly (for this write~up, anyway...I'm sure that I'm missing a few) disposables contain sodium polyacrylate~ a type of super absorbent polymer- the substance that becomes all gel-like when wet (anyone who as used disposables is familiar with sodium polyacrylate.) A similar substance was used in super-absorbency tampons until the early 1980's when it was discovered that it increased the risk of toxic shock syndrome by increasing absorbency and creating a nice environment for the growth of toxin-producing bacteria.

We move on to the environmental aspect of diapering. The Real Diaper Association- an advocacy group founded in 2004- estimates that the U.S. uses 27.4 billion disposable diapers each year. The EPA further translates this into more than 3.4 million tons of waste dumped into our landfills. Add to this mix the amount of petroleum, chlorine, wood pulp, water and energy that it takes to produce disposables...

The one plus that disposables have going for them is convenience. Admittedly, while we had visitors staying with us and when we traveled, we traded in the Bum-ware for seventh

generation brand disposables. Even with those exceptions, we saved a ton of money and, more importantly to me, a *crap~load* (laughing) of diapers from reaching the garbage.

Using cloth diapers is an amazing thing that you can (now easily) do for your baby's health, the environment, and your budget. The moment you throw away your last gel-filled disposable and wrap your little one in soft, warm, (safe) cotton, you'll understand why cloth-diapering mamas are so 'crazy' about cloth!

Happy diapering!

(a handful of diapering companies worth looking into-> bum-ware.com, fuzzibunz.com, happyheinys.com, bumgenius.com and betterforbabies.com)