

Cloth Diapers 101

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www.YoungAndRestless.net

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Please note: This information has been compiled from personal experiences and research. Manufacturer's information has been included for some products. No guarantees are made, and I cannot be held responsible for damages or perceived damages resulting from reliance on this information.

- All new diapers must be washed before you use them.
- This removes sizing and natural oils and allows the diapers to be absorbent.
- Wash and dry in warm or hot 2-4 times. Wash no more than 18-24 diapers at one time.
- You can wash new diapers with other laundry, if you don't have enough to justify a full load.
- Many diapers continue to become even more absorbent the more you wash them.
- The heat from the dryer will sterilize your diapers.
- Or, dry them in the sun, for the same benefit.
- New covers and nylon products generally only need to be washed once.
- Waterproof nylon products will last longer if air-dried.
- Stains can often be removed by exposure to direct sunlight! Lemon juice can enhance that bleaching process.

Janis' Dry Pail Method:

We use a simple small plastic trash can with a hinged lid, fitted with a large nylon pail liner. It holds about as many diapers as a typical washing machine can handle. We wash diapers every day for a newborn, progressing to every third day for a toddler. If you go much longer between washing, you're going to have odor or mildew problems. We have two pail liners so we wash one with the diapers and have a clean one for the pail.

All used diapers and washcloths go directly into the pail, whether poopy or just wet. Covers get aired out and reused unless messy (messy covers are rinsed off in the sink unless washing right away). Pocket diapers or all-in-ones wait in an open basket in the bathroom. You could rinse off messy Fuzzi Bunz, but we usually don't - their fleece is very stain-resistant. We do not put nylon products into the diaper pail for two reasons:

- the waterproofing will degrade
- nylon products can absorb odors and could be tricky to get clean later

Breastfed diapers don't need any presoaking, wiping, dumping, etc. The poop is water-soluble, so you can just let the washing machine take care of things. However, once you add solids to their diet, things change! Before putting that diaper into the pail, we use toilet paper and just wipe off the excess into the toilet *or* use a flushable liner in the diaper for an easier cleanup. Our diaper pail is in the bathroom, near the toilet, so we don't carry a messy diaper far.

Janis' Washing Method: (revised 3/11/06)

1. cold rinse to prevent stains from setting
 - Or, you could do a full cold wash cycle with a cold rinse
 - up to 1/2 cup of baking soda,
 - no laundry detergent or up to 1/2 the normal amount
2. hot or warm wash, cold rinse with detergent
 - 1/2 (or so) the normal amount of laundry detergent, up to 1/2 cup of vinegar
 - Baking soda is optional in this cycle
3. one more cold rinse (vinegar is not recommended in the final rinse)
4. dry the diapers on normal heat
 - with a large dry towel, to dry better but don't over-dry or they will be stiffer
 - covers and nylon products are air-dried to last longer

More Laundry Advice:

- You can use almost any detergent (preferably phosphate-free). We use Amway detergents because of my soap allergies, but almost any product will perform adequately. Some diaper manufacturers have specific recommendations, which you should always check so that you don't invalidate their warranty. In my research, I've found recommendations and cautions for and against many detergents - use your best judgment and follow directions.
- Detergents should not contain perfumes, dyes, chlorine bleach, or stain guard ingredients. Use less detergent than recommended.
- Pure soap products are not recommended for diapers (but can be used for covers) because they inhibit the absorbency of diapers. Some natural detergents do contain oils or softeners that may impair the function of your diapers and covers.
- Baking soda is recommended because it neutralizes urine and other odors. You should balance the pH by adding vinegar to the rinse.
- You can supplement occasionally with non-chlorine bleach or enzyme products. Ideally, any oxy-product should not contain additives other than sodium carbonate.
- **Never** use fabric softener or chlorine bleach. Be sure that your detergent doesn't contain these, either. If you use dryer sheets just for the rest of your laundry, you'll still have residue which could effect your diapers' absorbency. Best bet: don't use it - try vinegar!
- Distilled white vinegar is used as a natural fabric softener, static reducer, and it helps remove excess soap residue. It's useful for all of your laundry, especially if you have soap allergies. Too much vinegar can make diapers smelly, though!
- Warm water is usually warm enough for sanitary cleaning, but if you smell soap on your dry diapers or have rashes, increase to hot.
- If your diapers or covers seem to be leaking, you might need to tweak your laundering methods. Too much detergent can reduce the absorbency - use less soap or add another rinse cycle.
- If your covers aren't as waterproof, or your diapers are coated with fabric softener, you can possibly "save" them. Try this if you can't find information specific to your product: wash in plain hot water (if allowed), wash again with 1/2 cup baking soda and 1/2 cup vinegar, rinse with another 1/2 cup vinegar, final rinse in plain water.
- Always secure velcro tabs before washing or you'll have linty diapers. Use the fold-back tabs, or secure the diaper cover and wash it inside out.
- Don't worry too much about stains. You can minimize them by pre-washing or pre-soaking in cold water. (hot water sets stains) If you do have stains, just lay your diapers outside on a sunny day and naturally bleach out stains!
- You may want to dry fitted diapers on normal heat to preserve the life of the elastic.
- The diapers should have no unpleasant odor when you open the dryer - if you do, then you need to adjust your washing method. Vinegar could be the cause or the solution!
- Wool products have very specific needs. Research before you wash.

Organic cotton, hemp, untreated cotton, etc:

These more specialized fabrics usually need more washes in hotter water before you can use them. It also depends on your actual water temperature and quality. They actually have more natural water-resistant oils in them. Check with the manufacturer's recommendations, and they are leaking instead of absorbing, try washing them a couple more times.

Deodorizing the Dry Pail:

- baking soda in the bottom of the pail
- washcloth soaked in vinegar
- drop of tea-tree oil
- deodorizing disk

We've never noticed lingering odors, but you will notice a build-up of ammonia, the longer you wait between washing.

Wet Diaper Pail Method (we don't do this, but it appeals to some)

- use a locking diaper pail to prevent accidents
- fill the pail halfway with cold water - add tea tree oil, or 1/4 cup of baking soda, vinegar, Hydrox, or washing soda to control odors and bacteria
- never soak with bleach, detergent or soap - they can break down the diaper fibers
- never soak waterproof products
- dump the entire pail into the washing machine and run a rinse cycle before washing
- if you soak more than 3-4 days, you'll need to change the water

Diaper Rash:

- Laundry methods are often a contributing factor, if not the cause.
 - use less detergent or more water
 - use hot water instead of warm
 - add vinegar or another rinse cycle
 - change your detergent
- Use fleece or silk liners
- Change diapers even more often.
- Use caution with rash ointments. They can stain your diapers, make them smelly (even after washing), reduce their absorbency, or damage covers. Fish oils are especially problematic. You should probably use a flushable liner when using ointments.

Fuzzi Bunz Washing Instructions:

<http://www.fuzzibunz.com/careguide.html>

First! Fuzzi Bunz are a single use diaper - meaning you using it once and then wash it. You can not take the insert out and put another one in and keep using the Fuzzi Bunz. This was what was described in the book "Diaper Changes" and it is horribly incorrect. Use a Fuzzi Bunz and wash it.

When wet, simply separate the two pieces or shake the insert out into a basket, diaper pail or one of MOE's hanging diaper bags for easy washing.

If soiled, solid poop will "plop" right off of the diaper into the toilet. No rinsing or swirling... yuck. If there are "stickies" on the fleece, whatever does not shake off into the toilet will dissolve in the wash. If you just can't put it in the washer that way you can get a "mini-shower" and spray the poop off of the diaper before putting it in your washer.

Run a rinse or soak cycle first with no detergent just to dissolve any "left overs" and get much of the urine and mess out and spun out into the sewer where it belongs.

After the soak cycle run a HOT wash with the detergent of your choice. Do not over use your detergent as the full recommended amount by the manufacturer is a bit too much - however you do need enough to clean dirty diapers. 1/2 the recommended amount is sufficient and if you find you have a cleaning problem then add more detergent.

Your hot wash cycle will more than likely have a cold rinse that follows. No need to run a second rinse unless you are having a really dirty diaper problem or feel you must if it was a particularly dirty load.

You can either tumble your diapers dry on low heat or hang to dry, either way they will dry quickly and be ready to put back on your baby.

Do wash your Fuzzi Bunz after each use.

Do make sure that there is a snug fit

Do make sure that you have the correct size for your baby.

Do contact the manufacturer if you have any problems

Do not use fabric softener or use pure soap products on your Fuzzi Bunz.

No bleach or exposure to high heat for prolonged periods of time.

Detergents we recommend for use with Fuzzi Bunz:

Allens Naturally is our detergent of choice, you can buy it directly from Allen's Naturally or from Mother of Eden. Its economical for the amount of loads it will wash, washes clean with no residue and will keep your diapers clean!

Others that work well are:

7th Generation

Ecover

Life-Kind

Cheer Free

Oxiclean can be used

Pure Soap

<http://www.fuzzibunz.com/detergents.html>

Natural soap products such as pure glycerine soap or cleaning agents made with citrus or other oils do not work for this reason: They may clean the fibers, but a slight oily film or "soap scum" is left on the fleece. When this happens it makes it very difficult for urine to get through the layer of fleece to the absorbent core in the middle of Fuzzi Bunz - as you know oil and water do not mix.

The result?? Either Fuzzi Bunz that leak or the fleece will stay wet next to the skin and not become dry as it should be.

Fixing the problem

We have (as have others) had many theories on what is called "stripping diapers." I don't like that word. I would rather call it just plain ole upkeep and something that should be done every now and again as a preventative measure in taking care of your diapers and prolonging their life.

If you have any of the following problems this system should work for you:

- Persistent stinkiness
- Repelling fleece*
- Fleece that stays wet
- Leaking diapers

*The fleece used in Fuzzi Bunz is a proprietary fleece designed to our specifications and needs. Our fleece is designed to absorb water quickly, dry to the touch quickly and resist residue buildup.

Solving the Problem

1. Get a good detergent like Allen's Naturally, 7th Generation or Ecover.
2. Run all of your diapers through a plain water hot wash.
3. Run all of your diapers through a hot wash with the full recommended amount of detergent.
4. If the problem is bad, repeat step three.
5. Run a cold rinse. If you have hard water you may want to add a water softener such as Baking Soda or Calgon Water Softener to soften your water and help release any left over detergent.
6. If you still see bubbles in your rinse run another cold rinse.
7. You can either Sun your diapers or tumble on low.

After this process (I know it is involved) you should have very clean diapers that do not smell like anything - no perfume - no urine. When the Fuzzi Bunz are completely dry, if you were having a buildup problem (repelling) take a nasal aspirator and put an insert into the pocket. Fill the nasal aspirator with water and put it close to the fleece and "pee" on the diaper with the aspirator. If it goes through, your repelling problem is fixed. However, again, repelling should not be a problem with Fuzzi Bunz diapers.

Kissaluvs Washing Instructions:

<http://www.kissaluvs.com/diapercare.htm>

- Wash/dry fleece and unbleached diapers on hot/high several times to reach initial absorbency.
- Wash only about a dozen or so at a time for the initial pre-washes. The fabric will lint a bit in these early washes.
- Toss wet or dirty diapers into a dry pail; wash every 2-3 days.
- An optional cold-water pre-rinse helps prevent stains and odor.
- Use hot water and everyday detergent, unless that detergent contains fabric softeners (a no-no for diapers).
- Veggie-based soap helps keep fabric soft, although its effectiveness depends on the hardness of your water. In any water, soap can coat fabric, so consider alternating soap and detergent to avoid decreased absorbency over time.
- No chlorine bleach. Nasty stuff, bleach.
- No fabric softeners, which coat fabric and reduce absorbency.

How many diapers to wash at a time depends on your washer, your washing routine, your philosophy, and your diapers. As a general rule of thumb, wash no more than 18 fitted diapers or 24 prefolds at a time. You may be able to do more or less, so do a little experimenting to find what works best for you and your washer.

Like towels and tee-shirts, diapers become more absorbent over time. This is especially true for cotton fleece and unbleached fabrics, which requires some initial "roughing up" in the washing machine.

Most detergents suggest using an obscene amount of detergent. Use enough to clean, but not so much that it leaves residue. If you see suds during a second rinse or a wash with no detergent, you're using too much detergent. Detergent residue attracts and retains soil and odor.

Bummi Washing Instructions:

<http://www.bummi.com/en/BummiCare.html>

- Diaper covers can be re-used until soiled or smelly.
- Simply rinse off any urine residue and air dry in between uses.
- Rotate your covers after each change.
- Check the care instructions on the label of your cover!

The following products should be washed in lukewarm water and hung to dry or air dried at a low setting in the dryer:

- Bummi Original
- Bummi Cotton
- Whisper Pant
- Cotton Whisper Pant

The following products can be washed in hot or warm water and dried at a regular setting in the dryer. Do not over dry.

- Super Whisper Wrap
- Super Snap
- Training Pant

- Always close the Velcro™ or Aplix™ closures before washing
- Don't use bleach or whitening agents. They will breakdown the fibers of your diapers and covers and are also very harsh on your baby's skin and the environment
- Never soak your covers! This will interfere with their waterproof qualities.
- Please note that some models of diaper covers should be washed separately from diapers.

BabyKicks Hemparoo® Washing Instructions:

<http://www.babykicks.com/use.html>

BabyKicks Hemparoo Diapers and Joey-Bunz are made from 55% hemp and 45% cotton.

Please wash your diapers three times in hot water with detergent, drying them each time, before you first use them. They'll continue to increase in absorbency with use, but that should be enough to get most of the natural oils washed out.

Washing your hemp:

You may use any detergent that does not contain enzymes (as enzymes can eat away at your baby's skin once he or she wets, causing a painful rash). If you use a soap product, be sure to do a second cycle with 1/3 cup baking soda to avoid build-up. You may also want to try using 1/4 cup vinegar in the rinse.

My personal wash routine:

I wash once in cold water with Sensi-Clean (available at some WAHMs or at www.Atsko.com). Then I wash once in hot water, adding 1/3 cup baking soda. Last comes a rinse cycle. I tumble dry on medium heat to reduce wear on the fibers.

What to do for "stinky" hemp:

Since hemp is such an absorbent material, it sucks everything right to the core of the fiber. This causes smells from a residual build-up once your baby wets. You may not ever experience this, depending on your water type and wash routine.

There's a couple of things you can try to solve this:

- Try washing your diapers or Joey-Bunz in hot water with no detergent, 1/3 cup baking soda and 1/4 cup vinegar. Do this a few times until the water no longer looks soapy at the end of the cycle.
- If the smell remains, you may want to try boiling your hemp for five minutes.

After you get the smell out of your hemp, be sure to use baking soda on a regular basis to keep everything smelling fresh.