

Cloth vs diapers

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Cloth Vs Disposable Diapers..... What's Best? Introduction Diapers have been used by humans throughout history. But, the word diaper did not originally refer to its use. Instead, the term originally referred to a type of cloth with a pattern of small repeated geometric shapes. The first diapers were made of a special type of soft cloth cut in geometric shapes. The method of creating geometric shapes in cloth was called diapering, but it eventually gave the name of the cloth used in making diapers back in 1590s in England. Diaper is used on children who are not yet toilet trained to prevent bed-wetting and to keep babies' skin clean and dry.

While it was originally made of cloth material, several variations and improvements were made on the diaper resulting in the creation of disposable diaper. Unlike cloth diapers which can be washed and reused multiple times, disposable diapers are thrown away after use (Leverich). The boom of the disposable diaper industry suggests that it is more preferred by parents than its cloth counterpart. Parents choose what they think is best for their baby. Hence, while the use of disposable diaper has become a trend, it actually has a number of disadvantages that may want parents to reconsider using cloth diapers.

Health and Comfort One of the main reasons of using diapers is to provide comfort for the baby by keeping their skin dry, healthy and free from rashes. Prolong wetness irritates the baby's skin and causes rashes. Cloth diaper is made from non-absorbent materials and thus it requires frequent diaper changes in order to keep the baby's skin dry. Frequent diaper changes can be avoided when using disposable diaper since it consists of a

superabsorbent substance called sodium polyacrylate that is capable of absorbing water up to 100 times its weight (O'Mara, 2003).

Since disposable diapers gives a sense of dryness even after a few wettings, parents can leave the disposable diapers on for hours. While disposable diaper is more convenient for the parents, studies have shown that it can cause a number of health problems to babies. A study published in the Journal of Pediatrics reported that 54 percent of one-month old babies using disposable diapers developed rashes, while 16 percent developed severe rashes. Another study also suggests that disposable diaper increased the incidence of diaper rash from 7. percent to 61 percent. Diaper rash occurs with disposable diapers because even if it can hold large quantities of urine, the slightly wet materials that are against baby's skin for hours can cause rashes (The New Parents Guide, 2012). Moreover, disposable diaper is well-sealed and therefore prevents proper circulation of air. It also traps the bacteria and ammonia that is produced when bacteria breaks down urine (O'Mara, 2003). It is apparent that in terms of health and comfort, cloth diaper offers more comfort and helps keep the baby's skin healthy.

Convenience

Parents opt for disposable diapers primarily for convenience. First, disposable diapers are thrown after use. Second, disposable diapers comes in convenient Velcro and snap closures that keep it securely fastened and well-fitted. Some diaper lines also include wetness indicator that tells the parents when it is time to change. Indeed, versus the traditional cloth diaper, disposable diaper is more convenient. However, cloth diapers have evolved

as well. Gone were the days when cloth diapers are fastened by safety pins that could dangerously prick the baby's skin.

Modern cloth diapers are as convenient as its disposable counterpart. Most cloth diapers are now featured with Velcro fasteners and some are fitted similar to disposable diapers, which makes diaper changes convenient and easy (Leverich). However, despite the innovations of cloth diaper, disposable diaper is still more convenient especially during travels wherein soiled diapers can just be thrown and do not need to be carried along for washing (The New Parents Guide, 2012). Cost

Cost is one of the factors that parents consider in choosing a diaper. Compared to disposable diaper, cloth diaper is more economical since it can be used again and again. Disposable diaper can cost as much as 32 cents per use compared to cloth diaper which only costs 5 cents per use. Washing the diapers yourself or even when using a laundry service will still result in significant savings (O'Mara, 2003). Moreover, the cloth diapers can be kept to be used as hand-me-down diaper for future babies. EnvironmentImpact

The environmental impact of disposable diapers is one of the important reasons why parents should use cloth diapers. While it could be argued that both types of diapers have the same environmental impact because of the processes required to clean the soiled cloth diapers, disposable diapers have greater environmental impact. Considering the number of disposable diapers used and discarded every day, and the number of diapers that could be used by a single child from birth until toilet-trained, disposable diapers is indeed a significant solid waste problem.

Aside from being a burden in landfill sites, disposable diapers are manufactured with wood pulp, which means that millions of trees are cut for its production. Manufacture of pulp and plastics used in disposable diapers also use toxic chemicals such as dioxins (O'Mara, 2003). Conclusion Parents only want the best for their baby, including the type of diaper to use. The main purpose of a diaper is to keep the baby's skin from wetness and keep it healthy. The ability of disposable diaper to hold wetness longer is the very reason why parents opt for this type.

It seems that parents choose disposable diaper mainly for convenience, but tend to disregard the potential adverse impacts of disposable diapers on their babies. Disposable diaper allows longer contact between the baby's skin and slightly wet materials may lead to rashes. The well-sealed disposable diaper is also an unhealthy environment as it promotes breeding of bacteria. While the greatest concern for parents is their baby's health and not the environment, parents should be aware of the adverse impacts disposable diapers have on the environment. References Leverich, L.

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