



Cloth Diapering 101

Table of Contents



[Why Choose Cloth](#)

1



[Cloth Diaper Terms](#)

2



[Types of Cloth Diapers](#)

4



[Cloth Diaper Accessories](#)

6



[Laundering Tips](#)

7



[FAQ's](#)

8

Why Choose Cloth



We know that new and expecting parents have an overwhelming amount of decisions to make when it comes to the well-being of their babies. Choosing whether to use reusable cloth diapers or disposable diapers is just one of the decisions that needs to be made. We understand that the abundance of information on cloth diapering combined with the variety of styles and brands can be confusing and intimidating for an expecting family. We hope that the information provided below will help simplify cloth diapering and enable you to make the best diapering decision for your baby and your family.

Savings

Based on 8,000 diaper changes from birth to potty training you can expect to spend between \$2,300 to \$2,800 on disposable diapers and wipes. In contrast, cloth diapering your baby can cost as little as a few hundred dollars. Using these figures, you can save up to \$2,500 by choosing to use cloth diapers and wipes. Proper care and use will extend the life of your cloth diapers and allow for further savings by using them on additional babies.

The #1 reason our customers chose to use cloth diapers was for the financial savings. (Based on Thirsties' 2012 Customer Survey of 720 cloth diapering families)

Use our [Savings Calculator](#) to see how much you can save by using Thirsties cloth diapers.

Healthy for your baby's skin

Disposable diapers contain various toxins such as Tributyltin, Sodium Polyacrylate, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) and trace amounts of Dioxin. Your baby's delicate skin functions as a sponge and what we put on it goes in it.

Thirsties uses low impact reactive dyes and processes that are eco-friendly. No heavy metals, toxic substances, or environmentally destructive practices are used in dyeing our fabrics. All Thirsties products are PVC (vinyl), phthalate, and lead free.

The second most important reason our customers chose to use cloth diapers was because they are healthier against their baby's delicate skin. (Based on Thirsties' 2012 Customer Survey of 720 cloth diapering families)

Environmental Impact

Disposable diapers generate sixty times more solid waste and use twenty times more raw materials than reusable diapers. Disposable diapers are the third largest contributor to our landfills and will remain intact for 500 years.

Style

With the available variety of styles, colors, and prints you can customize a diaper stash that fits your baby's personality and your budget. Thirsties offers over a dozen fun colors and several adorable prints to fashionably compliment your baby's style.

Convenience

With cloth diapers, there are no late-night trips to the grocery store for more diapers, no emptying your diaper pail into your already full trash bin, no pins and no rubber pants. With sturdy and easy-to-use closures cloth diapers go on your baby just as disposables do but with oodles more cuteness and style.

98% of our customers think that using cloth diapers is easier than they thought or about what they expected. (Based on Thirsties' 2012 Customer Survey of 720 cloth diapering families)

Fewer blowouts

Cloth diapers contain blowouts far better than disposables. You can sleep soundly knowing you won't be up during the night changing outfits, bedding, or bathing your baby.

Cloth Diapering Terms



Sizing

Sizing can be different from one manufacturer to another but will usually fall into one of the following categories.

One Size

One size diapers are meant to fit babies from birth to potty training. In general, one size diapers will not properly fit smaller newborn or preemie babies, leading to a gapping diaper and leaking. Many manufacturers who produce a one size diaper also offer a preemie or newborn line to ensure a proper fit for your newborn.

Two Size

Two-sized diaper systems are designed to effectively diaper your baby from birth to potty. In an effort to maximize the fit and affordability of cloth diapering your baby, Thirsties created our Duo line of products. Size one fits babies between 6-18 lbs, and size two fits babies from 18-40 lbs. Each of the two sizes in the Thirsties Duo line feature three rows of snaps to adjust the rise to your baby's shape, it is like having three sizes in one.

Sized

Sized diaper systems offer a specialized fit for your baby, but each size covers a narrower range than that of a Duo or One size system. Thirsties Diaper Covers are part of our sized system and are available in four sizes, x-small, small, medium, and large.

Components

Hook and Loop Closures

Hook and loop closures make diaper changes quick and provide an amazingly snug fit. Although hook and loop closures are the most convenient closure option, they have a shorter lifespan than snaps. Thirsties products use Aplix® brand's hook-and-loop system which is made in the USA and is regarded as the most durable on the market.

Snap Closures

Snaps are easy to use, are more durable than hook and loop and are strong deterrents to toddlers who prefer to be diaper-free. Snaps are also used throughout the Duo line on the adjustable rise.

Gussets

Gussets are a crescent-shaped inserts added to the leg openings of many cloth diapers for added performance and expansion. Thirsties signature leg gussets move with your baby, providing advanced protection against leaks.

Fabrics

PUL

No stuffy plastic or rubber pants! PUL provides a very reliable, pliable, and breathable yet waterproof outer layer for Thirsties' covers, wraps, and diapers. PUL stands for polyurethane laminate and is made from extremely durable polyester knit to keep your baby and his or her clothes dry.

Microfleece

A soft, napped wool-like fabric made from synthetic fibers. Microfleece fabric does not absorb, but rather allows moisture to pass right through, which is why it is often used as the layer closest to your baby's skin. The microfleece layer provide a 'stay-dry' effect for your baby's comfort. Microfleece can help to reduce diaper rash, resists staining, and is buttery soft to the touch.

Hemp Jersey

Hemp jersey is as soft as your favorite t-shirt but is more durable than pure cotton of the same weight and absorbs 25% more moisture! By using hemp, you are able to gain a substantial amount of absorbency without adding a tremendous amount of bulk to your diapering system. Thirsties hemp jersey is one of the softest and most durable available in the market. It is used in Thirsties prefolds and inserts.

Microfiber Terry

Our synthetic microfiber terry is used throughout our line as a soaker due to its performance characteristics of being highly absorbent and quick drying.

Cotton Velour

This velvety fabric is a cotton/poly blend that is absorbent, luxuriously soft and custom knitted and dyed to Thirsties specifications. It is used in Thirsties' fitteds, doublers and wipes.

Types of Cloth Diapers



There are different styles of diapers to meet the needs of each individual family and baby. All babies are shaped differently and have different absorbency needs so one type of diaper may work better for your baby than another. In addition to fit and absorbency, many families may also compare convenience versus cost. For example, an all in one or pocket diaper may be more convenient, but a two piece system is typically less expensive and can be more absorbent.

All In One

All In One, commonly known as AIO, is the most similar type of cloth diaper to a disposable diaper. The one piece system consists of a waterproof cover with the absorbency sewn inside.

[Thirsties Duo AIO](#) includes a signature tunnel design which allows for thorough cleaning and stuffing of additional absorbency as needed. The interior is lined with a stay-dry fleece to keep baby comfortable and dry. The soaker (absorbency) is made of microfiber terry.

To use: Simply slide the diaper under baby and fasten with hook and loop or snap closure.

Pros: Convenient, easy, quick, daycare and sitter friendly, great for diaper bags, can be paired with insert for additional absorbency

Cons: AIO's may take longer to dry than other diapers, may need additional absorbency for heavy wetters or extended, overnight use.

Pocket

A pocket diaper is a 2 piece system consisting of a waterproof outer shell sewn together with stay-dry lining with openings on one or both ends. The sleeve or pocket that is created is used to stuff the included absorbent insert.

[Thirsties Duo Diaper](#) (our pocket diaper) comes with a waterproof shell with a stay-dry lining sewn into it. The openings on both ends make for easy stuffing while allowing the insert to easily agitate out of the diaper in the wash. The inserts feature two layers of serged microfiber terry snapped together with five serged layers of hemp jersey; seven thirsty layers in all!

40% of our customers chose pocket diapers as their favorite type of cloth diaper. (Based on 2012 Thirsties Customer Survey of 720 cloth diapering families)

To use: Secure the insert within the tunnel or pocket, slide the diaper under baby and fasten with hook and loop or snap closure. You may find it easier to stuff the inserts into the diapers right after washing and drying, so that your diaper is ready for use.

Pros: Convenient, adjustable, daycare and sitter friendly (when inserts are pre-stuffed), absorbent

Cons: Bulkier than other diapers, need to stuff inserts into diaper after laundering

Fitted

Fitted diapers are made from absorbent fabric that is tailored to fit, providing complete coverage around your baby. Fitted diapers require the use of a diaper cover to make it waterproof. The use of the fitted diaper and a cover provides two elastic barriers at the legs and waist to prevent leaks.

[Thirsties Duo Fab Fitted](#) includes a signature tunnel design which allows for thorough cleaning and stuffing of additional absorbency as needed. The interior is lined with a stay-dry fleece to keep baby comfortable and dry. The soaker (absorbency) is made of microfiber terry.

To use: Simply take the fitted diaper, slide under baby, and fasten hook and loop or snap closure. Repeat steps with the diaper cover.

Pros: Ultra absorbent, soft, comfortable, can be paired with insert for additional absorbency

Cons: Bulky, long dry time, higher cost, 2 piece system that must be paired with absorbent layer

Prefold and Flat

Prefold and flat diapers are what most people think of when cloth diapering is referenced. Prefolds are popular for their affordability and are the most common diaper supplied by cloth diaper services. Using prefolds or flats requiring folding the diaper and then covering it with a waterproof diaper cover. Snappis are a popular closure used to secure prefolds and flats.

[Thirsties Duo Hemp Prefold's](#) revolutionary tunnel design provides a trim fit and is beneficial for better washing and quicker drying times. Our custom hemp jersey is incredibly soft and knitted right here in the USA. We do not recommend the use of diaper pins or Snappi fasteners with Thirsties Duo Hemp Prefolds as the fabric is knit and the sharp points on the fasteners may damage the fabric. We recommend trifolding our prefolds.

To use: Fold the prefold into thirds, and lay into a trim waterproof cover such as the Thirsties Duo Wrap or Thirsties Diaper Cover, and fasten hook and loop or snap closure. For added absorbency in the front for little boys fold the prefold down on top and then trifold.

Pros: Very absorbent, durable, soft, versatile, affordable

Cons: Takes extra time to fold

Stay Dry Duo Insert (exclusive to Thirsties)

[Thirsties Stay Dry Duo Insert](#) is a specialty that has two layers of our fast absorbing microfiber terry, topped with our stay-dry and stain resistant microfleece and snapped together with five layers of our buttery soft hemp jersey. Use the insert with a trim fitting cover to provide a snug fit.

To use: Lay the insert into the diaper cover, slide the insert and cover under the baby, and fasten hook and loop or snap closures.

Pros: Easy, quick, absorbent, affordable

Cons: Less coverage than a prefold or fitted diaper

Cover and Wrap

Covers and wraps are waterproof barriers that are used over fitteds, prefolds, specialty inserts, or flat diapers. The laminate inside of the diaper can be wiped clean between uses, allowing you to use the cover for 3-4 diaper changes before washing.

Thirsties offers our [Diaper Cover](#) and [Duo Wrap](#) as waterproofing options for your cloth diapers. The Diaper Cover comes in 4 sizes, has a generous cut, and the x-small features an umbilical cord cut-out. The Duo Wrap uses the duo sizing system and offers a trimmer fit.

To use: With the absorbent layer fastened on baby or placed inside the cover, slide cover under baby, and fasten with hook and loop or snap closure.

Pros: Light and pliable, double leg gussets, easy to use

Cons: 2 piece system that must be paired with absorbent layer

Cloth Diaper Accessories



Inserts

Inserts are used to add absorbency to a diapering system. Inserts can be placed between the diaper and cover or stuffed into the pocket or sleeve. Click [here](#) and [here](#) to view Thirsties insert options.

Diaper Ointment

It is very important to choose a baby ointment that is cloth diaper safe. Many traditional diaper ointments contain petroleum or other ingredients which coat fibers and cause diapers to repel. Click [here](#) to see Thirsties diaper ointment.

Reusable Wipes

Are a great alternative to disposable wipes and can save you up to \$500. Pair with a baby wipe solution for the best results. Click [here](#) to view Thirsties wipes.

Baby Wipe Solution

When using reusable wipes you will want to purchase a baby wipe solution to properly cleanse and moisturize your baby's skin. Click [here](#) to view Thirsties wipe solution.

Wet Bag

A great accessory for your diaper bag used to either enclose clean or soiled diapers. Wet bags come with a closure system to keep odors from escaping. Click [here](#) to view Thirsties wet bag.

Diaper Pail

The use of a diaper pail is necessary to keep odors at bay while storing your baby's soiled diapers until laundry day. 52 quart garbage pails with a lid are a popular choice but any large container with a closure will work.

Pail Liner

Washable liners are designed to fit your diaper pail and be thrown in the wash with your soiled diapers. Pail liners are waterproof and designed to keep odors sealed within. Click [here](#) to view Thirsties pail liner.

Diaper Sprayer

A hose with a nozzle that is attached to the plumbing of your toilet and is used to cleanse poop from soiled diapers. Diaper sprayers aren't typically necessary until your baby begins to eat solids.

Laundrying Tips



Pre-Wash

Before throwing soiled diapers in laundry pail be sure the hook and loop closures are attached to the laundry tabs on the inside of the diaper. This step will help prevent the diaper from becoming tangled during the laundrying process and will lengthen the life of your hook and loop.

For optimum cleanliness with standard washing machines, limit the size of your load to no more than 18 M/L or 24 XS/S diapers (plus inserts and wipes) and wash every other day. Also be sure to select the appropriate load size to provide an adequate amount of water to wash your diapers. Use warm water and a small amount of detergent for the pre-wash cycle to help pre-clean your diapers. If you do not have a pre-wash cycle on your washer, a short or quick wash cycle will work just as well.

For HE washing machines, we suggest a load of 12-15 diapers. Diapers need an ample amount of water to clean them properly, and HE machines do not normally use an adequate amount of water. To trick the washer into adding more water, add a large, wet bath towel to each load. You will use this in the pre-wash cycle, and leave in for the wash and rinse cycles.

*Although soaking can aid in stain removal, we do not recommend soaking anything but natural fiber diapers for longer than 10 minutes. Soaking your diapers for extended periods may damage laminates and lock in odors.

Wash

Choose a HEAVY cycle and wash on HOT for the main wash, using an adequate water level. You will want to use enough water to cover your diapers allowing them to soak. Please avoid using water temperatures higher than 130 degrees Fahrenheit for any item with components such as hook and loop, elastic, and laminate.

Many detergents on the market will leave a residue on your diapers that will affect the absorbency and will cause odors and diaper rash. Use a cloth diaper safe detergent that doesn't contain additives such as bleach, fabric softeners, pure soap, brighteners, and dyes. These can not only harm your diapers but also your baby's sensitive skin and in many cases will void your warranty.

When washing diapers or covers with components such as hook and loop, elastic, and lamination, please avoid; Borax, sanitize cycles, vinegar, and washing soda.

For hard water the use of additional detergent or Calgon water softener may be needed.

Rinse

After wash cycle add a warm rinse cycle.

Drying

Drying in direct sunlight is the very best method for drying, disinfecting, and getting rid of stains. However, take care not to leave diapers out longer than necessary as UV rays and high temperatures can also have an ill effect on diapering products. Cotton and hemp diapers will be somewhat stiff when hung to dry. One option to soften sun-dried cotton and hemp products is to add ½ cup vinegar to the second rinse cycle, or use the dryer while product is still slightly damp.

Generally, use a low temperature setting to dry your diapers. You can use a higher temperature setting when drying inserts, flats, and prefolds made from natural fibers. Adding a dry towel or wool dryer balls will shorten the drying process.

*Routine drying in the dryer will shorten the life of any diapering product - especially diapers or covers with hook and loop fasteners and elastic components.



What do I need to get started?

The number of diapers to purchase is based upon your budget, your diapering choice, and how often you will be laundering your diapers. The recommendations below are based on the assumption that you will be doing laundry every other day.

How many daily diaper changes should I expect?

Newborn:	10–12 diapers
6–12 months:	8–10 diapers
12–24 months:	6–8 diapers
24+ months:	4–6 diapers

How many diapers will I need in rotation?

Newborn:	20–24 diapers
6–12 months:	16–20 diapers
12–24 months:	12–16 diapers
24+ months:	8–12 diapers

How many covers do I need?

A [wrap](#) or [cover](#) can be wiped clean and reused several times before requiring a full washing. Thirsties recommends one wrap for every 3–4 diapers in rotation.

What accessories do I need?

We recommend purchasing 2 [pail liners](#), a cloth diaper friendly [diaper ointment](#), 1 [wet bag](#), 3 dozen [cloth wipes](#), 1 [baby wipe solution mist](#), cloth diaper friendly detergent, 1 diaper sprayer (optional), and wool dryer balls if using the dryer. If line drying, you may want to purchase a clothes line or a drying rack.

Please visit our [savings calculator](#) to see the costs of recommended diaper packages or to build your own stash.

Do cloth diapers smell?

Naturally, soiled diapers, whether disposable or cloth, do smell. But, if you wash your cloth diapers every other day, keep the lid on your diaper pail closed, and use a deodorizer in your pail you can all but eliminate odors.

What to do with poop?

This sounds like it could be a terrifying process but the use of a diaper sprayer make disposing of poop more than manageable. Diaper sprayers can be connected to your plumbing and used to spray the poop from the soiled diaper into the toilet. As an alternative, bio liners can be used to line the diaper making it simple to remove poop and flush it down the toilet.

The poop from breastfed newborns is water soluble so the soiled diapers can go right in the diaper pail with no need for rinsing. When your baby is introduced to solid foods his or her stool will become thicker. At this point it is now necessary to remove as much poop as possible before washing.

If you don't have a diaper sprayer or liner simply shake poop into toilet and use toilet paper or a scraper to remove any remaining poop.

Will my cloth diaper keep my baby dry overnight?

Typically, yes, although the use of additional inserts is recommended to avoid leaks. Pairing an [insert](#) or [doubler](#) with your existing diaper will provide the additional absorbency needed to keep your baby comfortable and dry all night long.

Do I need to do prep my new diapers before use?

At a minimum, all diapers should be washed and dried at least once before use. Products with natural fibers such as cotton, hemp, and bamboo should be washed and dried separately from other products at least 3 times before use. This will remove natural oils from the fibers, allow for shrinking, and help them reach maximum absorbency. Please use a cloth diaper safe detergent and wash on hot cycle.

Will my daycare allow me to cloth diaper my baby?

Not all daycare facilities will allow you to cloth diaper your baby while under their supervision. If you can educate your caretaker on the simplicity of cloth diapering, many will be receptive to the idea. To make it easy on them, we recommend using an AIO or a pre-stuffed pocket diaper with hook and loop closures. Don't forget to leave them a couple extra diapers and a small wet bag for dirty diapers.

How do I change a cloth diaper?

Before changing your baby's diaper be sure your [cloth wipes](#), [baby wipe solution](#), clean diaper, cover and insert (if needed), and [cloth diaper safe ointment](#) are in an accessible location on or near your changing table. If your diapering system requires an insert or a cover have them pre-assembled.

Lay baby on changing table, unfasten closures of dirty diaper and fold half way down. If the diaper contains poop use the front half of the diaper to wipe a large portion of it off your baby's bottom. Spray baby wipe solution on the wipe or directly on baby's bottom and use the wipe to clean your baby's diaper area. Once the diaper area is clean, use another wipe to pat area dry. Remove the soiled diaper from under your baby and put the diaper and wipes to the side.

Now place a clean diaper under the baby with the back edge even with the small of the back. Apply cloth diaper safe ointment if necessary. Pull the front of the diaper up to just below the baby's belly button, then use the closures and adjustable rise to ensure a secure fit to prevent leaking. If your baby is a boy be sure to point his penis down to keep pee from leaking out the top of the diaper.

If the soiled diaper contained poop be sure to shake it into the toilet and then cleanse with a diaper sprayer. If a diaper sprayer is not available use a scraper or toilet paper to remove any remaining poop. Note: This step is not necessary for breastfed newborns as their poop is water soluble. Toss soiled diapers and wipes in your diaper pail. If the diaper has hook and loop closures be sure they are attached to the laundry tab before tossing in your diaper pail. Remember to line your diaper pail with a [pail liner](#) to avoid cleaning your pail every laundry day.

To prevent diaper rash and leaking, change your baby's diaper every time the diaper is soiled or every 2–3 hours.

Why choose Thirsties Modern Cloth Diapers?

The mission of Thirsties, Inc. is to make it easy and affordable for every family to choose cloth while simultaneously investing in our local economy and sustainable business practices.

Only the best USA-sourced components are chosen for our products in order to reduce our carbon footprint, to help support domestic textile mills and our local economy, and to ensure that Thirsties diapers will last wash after wash.

We are very proud of the fact that all Thirsties products are USA-made by a group of very talented group of individuals, many of whom are moms working in the comfort and convenience of their own homes.

To learn more about Thirsties please visit our website, www.thirstiesbaby.com. We are happy to help you with your cloth diapering journey, and welcome any questions you may have. You may contact us via email at support@thirstiesbaby.com, via chat at www.thirstiesbaby.com, or via telephone at 888-315-2330.