

Cloth Diaper

Solutions

For Families in Need

Kim Rosas



Making Cloth Diapers Work

Why?

There are no public assistance programs that help families buy diapers. This means even those who have the safety net of WIC, Food Stamps, Welfare, or other programs still have to buy diapers. A recent study found that **30% of families struggle to afford diapers**. If they still cannot afford diapers the babies are sometimes left wearing a disposable longer than they should. In some cases, the disposable diaper is scraped out and put back on.* Reusing disposable diapers is a dangerous practice that leads to urinary tract infections, serious rashes, and is simply uncomfortable. Disposable diapers also contain SAP gel- a polymer containing chemicals that is not safe to be left on a baby for long periods of time. **Cloth diapers are a cheap and simple solution to the diaper need problem and may be able to help you!**

They can save your family over a thousand dollars when you compare their total cost to the amount you will spend buying disposable diapers over the 2-3 years your child is in diapers. *It is possible to cloth diaper a baby from birth to potty training for well under \$100!*

While not as easy as a disposable, cloth diapers aren't just pins and rubber pants, even at the cheapest end. Thanks to innovation in design, a Snappi can be used in place of two pins to secure almost any diaper. Snappi's have sharp plastic tines in three places and will grip most natural fibers with the exception of smooth flannel or other smooth materials.

"...yet with all the headaches, all the bloody knuckles from hand washing, every time I changed her diaper, I felt like 'Well, I have that covered. No matter what, I can keep my baby clean and dry.' It was an oasis of peace in a very hard time." -Kelly Sangree

Simple cloth diaper covers (also referred to as wraps) can keep any homemade diaper or store bought one that isn't waterproof from leaking onto clothes or furniture. They go on and close using velcro or snaps. This booklet includes a diagram for making your own fleece cover for \$1.00.

Washing

By far, washing is the largest concern of families who need or want to use cloth diapers. If you have a washing machine washing is very simple and takes very little of your own time. The machine does the work for you. If you don't have a dryer you can line dry all of your diapers inside or outside. If you do not have access to a washing machine there are ways to handwash diapers- it can take 30 minutes per wash cycle but contact with the actual dirty diapers is eliminated using a bucket and plunger.

Daycare

If you send your child to a daycare facility it is up to you if you would like to fight for using cloth diapers there as well. You can look up the laws in your state regarding cloth diapers in daycare. Even if you can't or won't use them in a daycare, using them at home can still save money in the long term and provide peace of mind knowing you only need to provide clean disposable diapers during the daytime hours and week.

*Smith, Megan V., Anna Kruse, Alison Weir, and Joanne Goldblum. "Diaper Need and Its Impact on Child Health." *Diaper Need and Its Impact on Child Health*. Pediatrics, n.d. Web. 04 Oct. 2013.

Diaper Options by Price

Free

When money is not available at all for diapers you can try these things:

Freecycle: Freecycle.org is a place to find free diapers. Either look for listings that have offered free cloth diapers or post an “In Search Of” asking for help. You don’t know until you try.

Craigslist or Kijiji: These websites often have a Free section. Search for “cloth diapers” in that forum. Also try posting ISO in an allowed forum.

Diaper Banks- There are local and national diaper banks that can provide you with a stash of cloth diapers for no cost, or for the cost of shipping (*depending on your area and the bank.*) Find a comprehensive list on clothdiaperbanks.org or reach out to a disposable diaper bank that may also help on nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org.

Cheap and DIY

Using resources from thrift stores, yard sales, or your own home you can fashion effective and affordable diapers that are as convenient as any store bought variety.

T-Shirt Diaper (no cut and no sew)- Raid the closet or find used 100% cotton t-shirts to use as a diaper. You can fold it into a diaper, no sewing or cutting required, and secure it with pins or a Snappi. See Diagram on page 11.

T-Shirt Diaper Flat (no sew, cutting required)- Using an XXL100% cotton t-shirt you can create two flats by cutting along the seams. No need to sew the edges. Use them like you would any flat diaper by folding the way you like best. See Diaper Fold diagrams page 10 and how to make a t-shirt flat on page 11.

Flats- Store bought flats can be found at Wal-Mart, Target, Ikea, and even Sam’s Club. They will be called Flour Sack Towels at most stores, except Ikea where they are called Burp Cloths. These flats are thin and not perfectly square but most flat folds will work on them. You may need to double up for babies who experience leaks due to lack of absorbency.



Other New but Inexpensive Options

Prefolds, Flats, and Covers are the cheapest yet still effective and durable options among new cloth diapers. Prefold prices vary by manufacturer and size but in the most common size it runs \$2.00 a piece. Flats can cost between \$1.00-\$2.00 for most brands. Covers also vary in price by maker, but choosing a One Size Fits Most cover will give you the most bang for your buck. Try brands like Econobum.

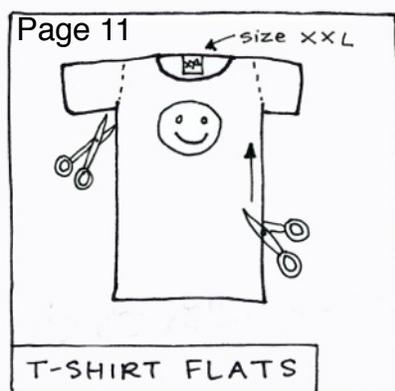
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Cloth Diaper Cost Versus Disposables</h2> <p><i>*numbers based on average cost of disposable diaper .25 each.</i></p>	3
<p><35\$</p> <p>Upcycled Cotton T-Shirts into Cloth Diapers and 3-4 One Size Covers.</p> <p>As many changes before washing as T-Shirt Diapers you make. As long as they fit depending on the size you make.</p> <p>140 Disposable Diapers or about 2.5 Weeks.</p>	<p><200\$</p> <p>20 Inexpensive Brand One Size Pocket Diapers 20 Diaper Changes before washing.</p> <p>800 Disposable Diapers or about 8 weeks.</p>
<p><50\$</p> <p>Flour Sack Towels. 1.00 Each. Add 3-4 One Size Covers.</p> <p>20-24 Changes before washing. 200 Disposable Diapers or about 3.5 Weeks.</p>	<p><400\$</p> <p>Gro Via Live Package which includes: 12 GroVia Shells 24 GroVia Organic Soaker Pads 4 GroVia Boosters</p> <p>24 Diaper Changes before washing. 1,600 Disposable Diapers or about 16 Weeks (4 months)</p>
<p><100\$</p> <p>2 Econobum Prefold Kits which would add up to: 24 One Size Prefolds 6 One Size Covers 2 Wet Bags</p> <p>24 Diaper Changes Before washing. 400 Disposable Diapers or about 7 weeks.</p>	<p><500\$</p> <p>24+ bumGenius 4.0 One Size Pocket Diapers</p> <p>24+ Diaper Changes before washing. 2,000 Disposable Diapers or about 35.5 Weeks (8-9 Months)</p>
	<p><1,000\$</p> <p>24 EcoPosh Recycled Organic One Size Fitteds and Additional Covers</p> <p>24 Diaper Changes before washing. 4,000 Disposable Diapers or 71.5 Weeks (18 Months)</p>

The Average American Baby will learn to use the potty at 36 months. Even the most expensive cloth diaper option will still save money in the long run.

The \$15 Cloth Diaper Stash

You read that right- \$15 and **NO SEWING**

The most inexpensive way to cloth diaper utilizes thrifted or free t-shirts and polar fleece (heavy fleece). If you make 5 Fleece Covers and 21 T-Shirt flats, plus buy one Snappi, you can cloth diaper for \$15.00!



T-Shirt Flats

You need 12 XXL 100% cotton T-shirts and about 2 yards of heavy fleece.

Follow the instructions to make a DIY T-Shirt Flat on page 11. Twelve t-shirts will yield 24 flats. Adjust the amount you need, but expect to pay about \$1.00 per shirt or .50 if you go to your local thrift store on a day that clothing is 50%.

One Size DIY No-Sew Fleece Covers

Covers are very hard to find locally, however for about \$1.00 you can DIY your own fleece cover! No sewing required! Diagram Page 12.

Find a large fleece blanket (preferable) at a thrift store. If you can't, try your local fabric store and don't forget to use a coupon! Cut out the shape of a diaper (I did mine 24" long- see video tutorial on www.dirtydiaperlaundry.com) and leave plenty of fabric on the back wings to use for tying in front. Fleece is a waterproof material and this cover is pretty effective for what it is and what it cost.



Supply List

Diapers and Accessories

12-24 Diapers if you plan to wash every other day (every day with 12 diapers and a newborn, who will use 10+ diapers per day. Babies use less diapers per day as they get older.)

4-6 covers will be needed. Certain covers, like Econobum brand, can be wiped clean. One Size covers are ideal because you only need to buy once set and can use them from infant to potty training. Covers are hard to find so consider a No Sew Fleece cover if you can't find the waterproof PUL versions. Pull on pants are sold in many big box stores like Wal-Mart for a few dollars each.

2 Reusable Wet Bags (or store dirty diapers in plastic grocery bags or a simple bucket that is out of reach from baby.)

Detergent- a cloth diaper safe detergent is recommended to keep your diapers working well without repelling, an issue that comes from buildup left by certain type of detergents. You can use grocery store brands that lack fabric softeners. Use only one tablespoon of detergent per load. If you notice the diapers smell dirty after washing use more than one tablespoon.

Optional Accessories

Cloth Wipes- simple squares of fabric for wiping baby with. Wet with water before use or create a simple wipe solution using water and a drop of gentle baby soap. You can DIY baby wipes by cutting squares of flannel, or buy very inexpensive baby washcloths.

Flushable Liners- these liners lay in the diaper to make cleaning the solid waste easier. Remove the liner and flush it, or shake out the contents in the toilet then throw the liner away if you would rather not flush it.

Supplies for Handwashing

Camp Style Washer materials

5 Gallon Plastic Bucket

Inexpensive Plunger from Dollar Store (or a breathing washer for \$20 that is more effective, but also more expensive)

Optional: Lid for Bucket with a Hole Drilled in for plunger to reduce splashing

Drying:

A Drying Rack (or hang diapers over shower rod and anywhere else you can find a spot)

Use and Care of Cloth Diapers

Using cloth diapers is a simple task but the exact way you put one on your baby will depend on the style you have. This is a short list of the types of cloth diapers available.

Prefolds must be secured onto the baby with either a Snappi or Pins. Snappi's are sold online, but may be found in a baby store like Buy Buy Baby or Baby Boutiques. They cost 2.50. *Folding techniques to follow on page 9 and Snappi instructions page 12.* These need a cover to be waterproof.

Flats are a single layer of materials, usually cotton, and are large squares. Often they are around 27" square. After folding into a diaper shape (*see page 10 for folds*) they secure using a Snappi or pins. These also need a cover to be waterproof.

Fitteds are a non-waterproof diaper that looks just like a regular diaper (an All-in-One or Pocket) but has no waterproof materials. They often come in very cute designs to make matters more confusing. They still require a cover unless you want to use them around the house during the summer months for more breathability. They work great overnight with a cover and hold a lot of liquid.

Covers are needed to keep the wetness inside of prefolds, flats and fitteds. They wrap right over the prefold or flat and secure with snaps or velcro. They can be sized or One Size fit Most; if it's One Size it needs to be adjusted to best fit your baby.

Pockets are waterproof diapers, often One Size fits Most, that use an absorbent insert. The insert is placed inside of the pocket opening. The entire diaper must be washed after use. Remove the insert before washing to ensure it gets clean.

All-in-Ones go on just like a disposable and are one piece. The entire diaper needs to be changed after use. Some All-in-One diapers take a while to dry so if you plan to line dry consider a pocket over an All-in-One or better yet, flats and covers.

Washing and Drying- Machine

Cloth diapers should be washed every 2-4 days in loads of 8-12 diapers.

Step 1: Rinse diapers in cold.

Step 2: Add detergent. Run a Hot Wash and let diapers rinse.

Step 3: If possible, run an additional rinse.

Step 4: Dry on Warm Heat or Line Dry.

Step 5: If stained, lay in the sun to remove stains. Sun also sanitizes.

Use and Care Continued...

7

Washing and Drying- Hand Washing

Using cloth diapers is still possible without a machine. Even on a part-time basis doing so can save your family money. You can choose to only use cloth diapers when you need them most and wash by hand. If you are handwashing full time consider taking your diapers to a friend's home or a laundromat 1-2 times a month.

For handwashing it is BEST to use flats and covers. Flats are large squares of cotton that are a single layer of material- this makes them easy to get clean and means that they dry faster. Other styles that have many combined layers in the insert or wet zone will be harder to get clean when handwashing and can take a day or more to line dry. Since they're made from cotton they're also less prone to build-up that can make the diaper less absorbent over time. This is sometimes called "repelling" in the diaper world, and can happen more often to diapers with synthetic stay dry linings, like most pocket style diapers.

Camp Style Washer

Step 1: Add your diapers to the bucket and fill it close to the top with cold water. Agitate using the plunger for 2-4 minutes. Drain water.

Step 2: Fill bucket near the top with HOT water and add your detergent, usually 1/4 tablespoon. Agitate for as long as you feel you need to, 5-10 minutes is average. Drain.

Step 3: Fill the bucket with cold water to rinse with. Agitate with plunger. You may still see bubbles. If you have a lot of bubbles, pour out water, add more, and agitate again. When most or all of the bubbles are gone when agitating pour water out.

Step 4: Wring diapers out. The better you wring, the faster they dry. Wear gloves while wringing to protect your hands. Roll covers in a clean, dry towel.

Step 5: Dry diapers flat if possible, hanging them on a line or over a rack.

Step 6: When dry, wring the dry flats in your hands and twist them to soften. They will feel as soft as from a dryer rather than stiff if you do so.

Bathtub or Sink

Do the same as above but use your feet and or hands to agitate. Wear latex gloves to wash if desired.

Use and Care Continued...

Troubleshooting

Sometimes things like leaks, or odors, arise when using cloth diapers. Here is a brief list of problems. Keep this page for reference in case you run into a problem in the future.

Leaks are often due to either

- Poor Fit
- Lack of absorbency
- Repelling

Poor Fit

The smallest babies tend to have the most leaks because one size diapers don't fit them as well, if that is what's being used. Newborns and infants wet more frequently than babies and toddlers as well.

Solution: Check legs for any gaps in fit, make sure waist is snug, and/or change more frequently. If you have a boy, check to make sure his penis is pointing down, not up.

Lack of Absorbency

Most babies only need one pocket diaper insert, a prefold, or a flat and this is enough. If you change your baby and notice leaks and the diaper or insert is completely saturated it could mean you need more than what you are currently using.

Solution: A doubler, made of cotton or another natural fiber can boost the absorbency. Add to your pockets or lay inside of prefolds/flats/fitteds. If the budget is tight find old 100% cotton t-shirts and cut them up, fold into rectangles, and add to the diaper's wet zone.

Repelling

When diapers aren't properly rinsed, detergent and/or minerals from the water can build-up in the fabric. This happens more with synthetic fibers such as suedecloth, microfleece, and microfiber.

Solution: You'll need to do what is known as "stripping," it involves several rinses of the diapers without detergent to remove the build-up.

Odors

"Barnyard" and "Ammonia" are two odors commonly faced. A funky smell after the diaper has been peed in usually means they aren't clean enough so you should add more soap when washing. Ammonia odor is very strong and means ammonia from urine isn't being washed out completely. Try stripping the diapers, sunning them, or using bleach.

Rashes and Diaper Creams

When it comes to rashes there is no way to self diagnose your child with 100% accuracy either from a book or from the Internet. If your child has a rash that looks severe and/or painful it is advisable to see your pediatrician.

Types of Rashes

Contact rashes are usually localized and appear in certain places. The causes can be rubbing or chafing from the diaper or related to an allergy to a material in the diaper. Be mindful of how where the rash appears and trace it back to rubbing, or the material it is near. Try another kind of diaper to compare. If you find one type or brand causes rashes you will need to discontinue using it.

Ammonia rashes are usually flat and red rashes that are a result of the build-up of ammonia in cloth diapers. This happens more often when using a diaper overnight. Try a cloth safe rash cream to treat the rash and strip the ammonia from the diapers to prevent it from happening again. Stripping involves many rinses of the diaper. You can try adding 1/4 cup of bleach to kill the ammonia, or try laying the diapers in the sun. If ammonia persists and rashes keep happening your last resort could be to use disposables for overnight until the ammonia is handled.

Yeast and Staph are two types of rashes that can live in cloth diapers. If your baby is diagnosed with a yeast rash or staph you will receive a prescription cream to treat it. Do not use cloth diapers with these creams and discontinue using them until the rash has been cleared for several days. You will have to use bleach on the diapers to get rid of the rash. Not doing so may re-infect your baby with the rash.

Cloth Diaper Safe Rash Creams

Not every rash cream sold at stores is safe to use with cloth diapers. Petroleum based creams such as A&D and Desitin will create build-up in your diapers. If you have a Target, California Baby is a brand that is safe to use with cloth diapers. Or simply look for brands lacking petroleum in the ingredients list. If you need to use a non-safe cream while using cloth diapers try flushable liners sold at many cloth diaper stores as a barrier.

Coconut Oil, now sold at most grocery stores, is safe for cloth diapers and can be used as a diaper cream.

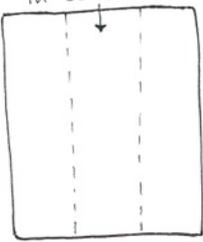
Breastmilk, if you are nursing, can be applied to baby's skin and will help as well.

Airing out the rash is a good idea if you are able. Lay baby on a diaper and let the skin breathe!

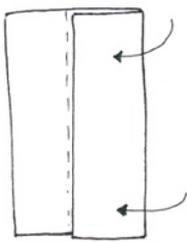
Diaper Folds

Prefolds

soaker (thicker panel) in center



fold sides in along seams



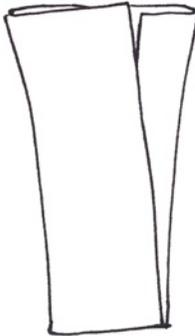
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place in diaper cover
roll front under if too long

PREFOLD: trifold

begin with trifold, fan out back of diaper



PREFOLD: angel wing



bring up front, pull back corners from behind



secure tightly with Snappi at sides and bottom

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roll middle of diaper inward

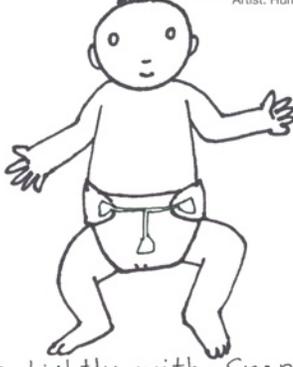


on both sides

PREFOLD: jelly roll



bring up front, pull back corners from behind

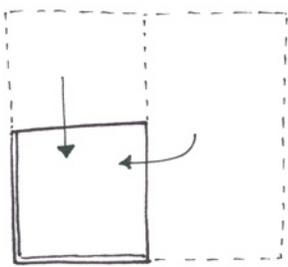


secure tightly with Snappi at sides and bottom

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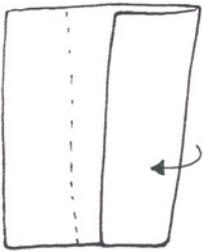
Diaper Folds Continued....

Flat Folds



fold in half, then in half again to make a square

FLAT: pad fold



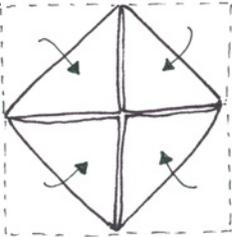
fold sides in, leaving it wider at the back

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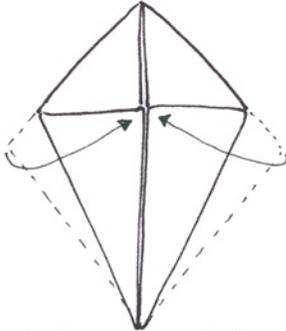
place in diaper cover
roll front under if too long

best fold for newborns and infants

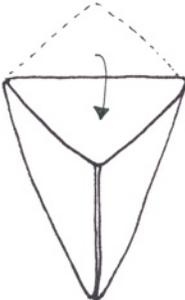


fold corners into center

FLAT: mini kite

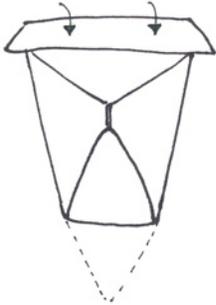


fold side corners into center again



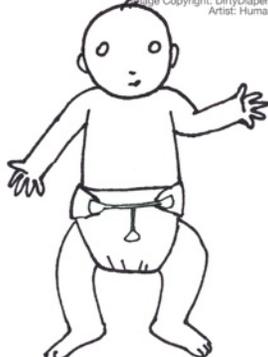
fold top down to form a triangle

fold front up and fold over back edge

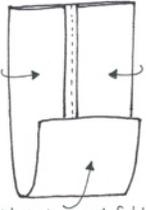


bring up front, pull back corners from behind

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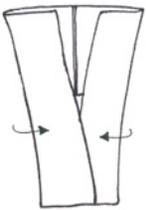


secure tightly with Snappi at sides and bottom

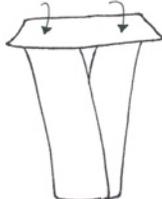


fold sides in and fold up front

FLAT: diaper bag



fold sides in again, fan out back of diaper



fold over back edge



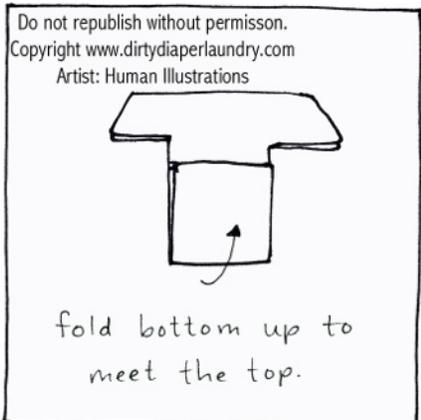
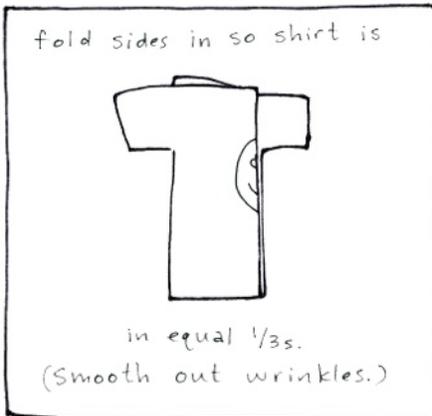
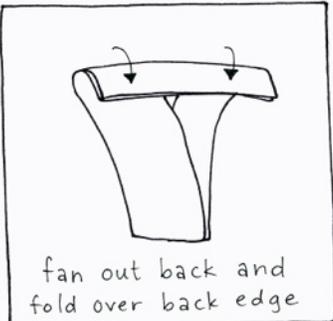
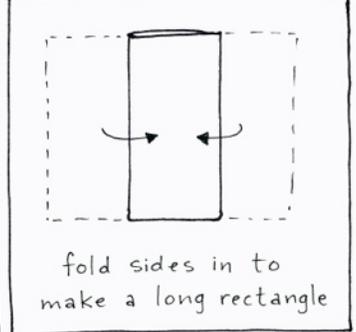
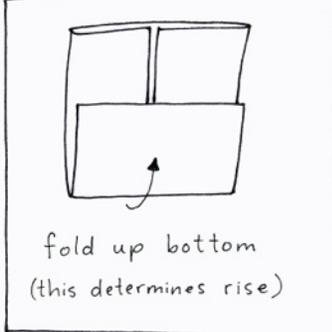
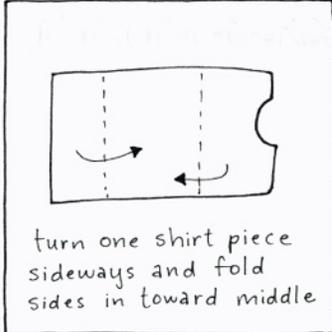
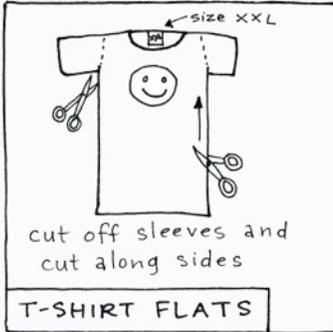
bring up front, pull back corners from behind

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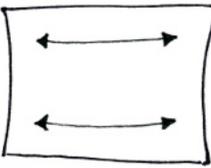


secure tightly with Snappi at sides and bottom

DIY T-Shirt Diapers



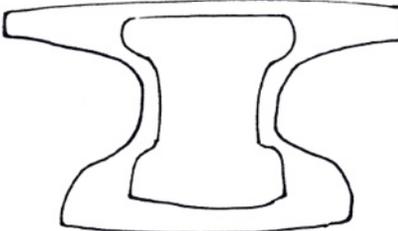
first check the stretch!
lay fleece so the fabric
stretches side to side:



(not up and down)

**NO-SEW FLEECE
DIAPER COVER**

use a diaper cover as a
template, but your cover
should be longer & wider
with very long tabs in back



place under diapered baby,
roll in middle if too wide.



roll in like the
jelly roll

prefold
diaper
or flat

bring front up, tuck in the
sides, and roll over

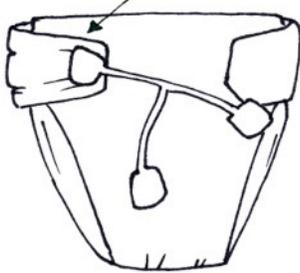


top edge if the rise
is too long

tie long tabs in front
in a single or double knot

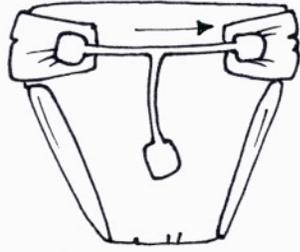


make
sure
it covers
the diaper
around
the legs

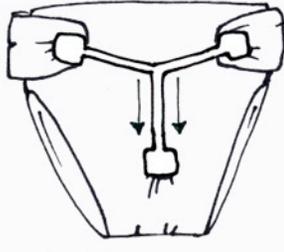


attach to one "wing"

HOW TO USE A SNAPPI



pull tightly across
and attach to
opposite wing



pull bottom piece
tightly downward
and secure to diaper

Resources for Cloth Diapers

Local

Try your local area first if you need access to or help with cloth diapers. In person help is the best option.

Look to see if you have a local cloth diaper bank in your area (full list on www.clothdiaperbanks.org)



You can also look for cloth diaper classes hosted by the **Real Diaper Association** (www.realdiaperassociation.org) or at any nearby cloth diaper stores or baby boutiques.

If you are in an emergency situation and have run out of diapers contact **The National Diaper Bank Network** (www.diaperbanknetwork.org) to see if they can assist you in finding a disposable diaper bank or call **211** to see if there is local assistance near you.

For emergencies also try t-shirt diapers, diapers made from towels, diapers from blankets. All you will need is a Snappi or pins to secure it on the baby. Download the Emergency Diapering Booklet “*Have Snappi... Will Diaper...*” from www.dirtydiaperlaundry.com.

Online

Giving Diapers, Giving Hope is a national cloth diaper lending foundation that provides qualified families with cloth diapers for the cost of shipping. www.givingdiapersgivinghope.org

Dirty Diaper Laundry has information on handwashing and emergency diaper solutions. <http://bit.ly/14eFalz>.