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The Basics Of Baby Laundry

By Kirsten Hawkins

Ah, the sweet smell of a clean baby! You may be tempted to enhance that clean, fresh smell by

running baby diapers and onesies through a final rinse with fabric softener – but don't! The perfumes in fabric softener can irritate a baby's sensitive skin, or spark allergies that cause uncomfortable rashes. With all those adorable babies and teddy bears on fabric softener packages, who would have guessed?

Here's another handful of tips for taking care of baby's clothes during the first year, focusing on laundering and stain removal.

Choose a detergent that's free of dyes and perfumes. There are a number of brands of laundry detergent that are specially formulated for baby's clothing, including Ivory Snow and Dreft. It's really not necessary to resort to those, though. You can wash baby's clothes with yours, as long as you use an allergen free, no-dye, no-fragrance detergent.

Baby's sleepwear especially should be washed in a mild detergent made without animal fats or other water conditioners. Flame retardant sleepwear is specially treated to keep children's pajamas from flaring into flame if ignited by a spark. The flame retardant chemicals can be affected by fabric softeners and conditioners. Don't use them on baby's sleeping gowns and stretchies.

Getting Rid of Baby Stains Formula, baby food and – well – baby poop, are among the worst challenge for laundry detergents, thanks to their high protein content. To keep spills from becoming tough stains:

-- Scrape off as much as you can, being careful not to scrub it in instead. -- Get the stained item into cold water as soon as possible. If you can get it into the washer right away, let it agitate in cold water through a cycle – without soap. If you catch the stain before it dries, it may be enough to keep the stain from setting at all.

-- Do NOT use hot water on formula stains, baby food stains or baby diaper stains. The heat can set the stain permanently by 'cooking' it into the fibers of the fabric.

The Basics Of Baby Laundry

— If the cold water cycle doesn't do the trick, add another tub full of cold water and detergent, and let it soak for half an hour. Run it through, wash in warm water, rinse and repeat. If it's really stubborn and still there after a soak and two washes, try it one more time – soak in detergent and cold water for at least half an hour, then wash in warm water, rinse and repeat.

— If you use bleach to help get the stain out, make sure that you rinse well to get out all traces of bleach that can irritate baby's sensitive skin.

Cloth diapers call for special treatment. If you don't have a diaper service, make sure that you have what you need to deal with the laundering. The basics are a covered diaper pail, Borax, baking soda, bleach and vinegar.

First: Fill the diaper pail with warm water and half a cup of Borax. Rinse diapers out before placing them in the Borax solution to soak.

Second: When you're ready to wash, use laundry detergent, hot water and bleach.

Third: Wash a second time, using just water to remove bleach and detergent residue. Add vinegar to the final rinse to help loosen detergent residue and whiten diapers. You can also add baking soda baking soda to the final rinse to help soften fabric.

Kirsten Hawkins is a baby and parenting expert specializing new mothers and single parent issues. Visit

<http://www.babyhelp411.com/>

for more information on how to raising healthy, happy children.

Watch Out For Allergies With Baby Laundry!

By Kirsten Hawkins

So you're having a baby. You think you've thought of everything, but at the same time you're terrified that you've missed something. Here's one thing you may or may not have thought of: laundry. Yes, you know that you will have more, but have you considered the basic differences between your baby's laundering needs and yours? If you regularly use perfumed detergents, bleach, or fabric softener, your laundering habits may need some reform.

Gone are the days of washing clothes just because they smell. Your baby is going to burp up stuff you've never thought of, and your laundry piles are going to skyrocket. This is only one new concern, however, since your baby's skin is much more sensitive to chemicals than you and your spouses' grown up skin. Laundering the baby's clothing in detergents that are free of perfumes and dyes is one quick way to help ensure that your baby does not get unnecessary discomfort from irritating chemicals.

The Basics Of Baby Laundry

There are detergents formulated specifically for babies, but for the most part as long as you stay away from perfume and dye heavy products, your baby should be just fine. There are of course rare cases in which the baby has specific allergies, in which case it is probably best to find one brand that works for your baby's skin and stick with it. Unfortunately for your baby, this may mean a short trial and error process. As with food allergies, just keep a keen eye out and make sure you seek immediate medical treatment when you are concerned about anything.

Another thing that is important when laundering baby clothing is to make sure that you launder any cloth diapers separately. If you are using cloth diapers, you may think of the obvious reason: these items of clothing are obviously much more soiled than the average baby clothing item. It is best to launder these items twice: once in bleach with a double rinse, and then a second time with just vinegar during the last rinse cycle. This is important because not only is the baby using these items a lot more frequently (so they get a lot more wear), but also they are the closest to the baby's very sensitive skin. So making sure that cloth diapers are as allergen free as possible is a key factor in keeping your baby comfortable and happy.

The last item on our laundry agenda will keep your laundry service or electric company well fed, and you plenty busy. As your baby quickly outgrows each new item of clothing, and a new one needs to be purchased to replace it, the new items should all be washed before being put on the baby. That includes outerwear and bath accessories, but is especially important for things that you buy a lot of, like undershirts, socks, and onesies. The first couple of months are particularly crucial in determining what kind of laundering ritual is best for your new addition. This is also a time in which you will be getting used to a lot of specifics about your new baby. Make sure no matter how you launder your baby's clothes, you keep a good eye out for possible allergic reactions and rashes. A comfortable baby is a much happier baby.

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