



## Cloth Diapering 101 Workshop — Course Outline

Presented by the Real Diaper Circle of Metro Vancouver

Website: [www.vancouverdiapercircle.ca](http://www.vancouverdiapercircle.ca)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/realdiapercirclevancouver](https://www.facebook.com/realdiapercirclevancouver)

**Overview:** This workshop is designed to introduce new parents and parents-to-be to the benefits of simple, affordable cloth diapers by providing a hands-on opportunity to see and feel different types of modern reusable cloth diapers. The workshop will cover how to use and clean cloth diapers, how to get started with cloth diapering, and how to cloth diaper on a budget.

### A. BRIEF HISTORY OF DIAPERS

- Cloth diapering has been around for centuries
- 1950s - emergence of first disposable diapers (considered a luxury item)
- 1980s/1990s - cost of disposable diapers had decreased and they became hugely popular with the introduction of sodium polyacrylate, a super absorbent polymer (SAP).
- Starting in late 1980s/1990s - innovations in cloth diapers by work-at-home-moms led to emergence of modern cloth diapering options
- Disposable diapers still dominate the market today - Pampers accounts for \$10 billion/year in revenue at Proctor & Gamble.

### B. WHY CLOTH?

- Health - disposable diapers contain potentially harmful chemicals, such as:
  - SAP - banned from use in tampons due to their link to toxic shock syndrome
  - dioxins - linked to cancer, asthma, compromised immune systems, hormonal disorders, infertility
  - chemicals causing diaper rash - rate of diaper rash increased from 7% in 1955 to 78% in 1991
- Environment
  - Burden on landfills - 4 million disposable diapers thrown out each day in Canada
  - Environmental contamination - untreated urine and fecal matter from soiled diapers leaching into groundwater and soil
- Cost savings - disposable diapers for one child cost \$2000 over 2 years, whereas a set of reusable cloth diapers can be purchased for as little as \$300 and can be reused for multiple children. Even after factoring in laundering costs, cloth diapers come out ahead in cost savings and can save a family thousands of dollars over the costs of disposables.

### **C. TYPES OF CLOTH DIAPERS**

- traditional - prefolds or flats, used with waterproof cover
- fitted, used with waterproof cover
- pocket diaper - removable absorbent insert stuffed into a pocket between the diaper's inner wicking and outer waterproof layers
- all-in-one diaper - absorbent layers sewn into the diaper
- all-in-two diaper (hybrid between two systems)
- sizing - one-size diaper can be used from newborn to toddler age, has snaps on front panel to adjust the rise as baby grows; multi-size diapering systems also available (smaller size for newborn/baby, larger size for baby/toddler).
- demonstration of how to put on each type of diaper

### **D. HOW TO USE, STORE AND WASH CLOTH DIAPERS**

- After changing a diaper, place the wet diaper in a dry diaper pail or in a wetbag. If the baby is eating solids then dump the poop into the toilet prior to placing the diaper in the pail/wetbag.
- On wash day, put the wetbag and its contents into your washing machine. To avoid bacteria build-up, you should not go more than 2 or 3 days before laundering soiled cloth diapers.
- The basic recommended wash routine is:
  1. Run a pre-wash cold or warm rinse without detergent (or use a little bit of detergent).
  2. Run a long hot water wash cycle using preferably a laundry detergent that is free of brighteners, dyes, softeners, bleach and synthetic fragrances. These additives can build-up on the cloth diapers, irritating baby's skin and impeding absorbency. For natural detergents, use the full amount of detergent that is recommended on the detergent packaging. For mainstream detergents, you may want to start with less than the recommended amount.
  3. Run two cold or warm rinses.
  4. Line dry or tumble dry.

### **E. HOW TO GET STARTED WITH CLOTH DIAPERING**

- What do you need to start? Checklist: cloth diapers (16 - 24), wetbags (1 large one for home use, 1 small one for cloth diapering on the go), diaper sprayer (optional but helpful in spraying poop off diaper and into the toilet), cloth diaper laundry detergent
- Where to source cloth diapers - brick and mortar stores, online stores (see Resources section of "[www.vancouverdiapercircle.ca](http://www.vancouverdiapercircle.ca)")
- How to cloth diaper on a budget - buy used cloth diapers (Craigslist or Facebook swap groups – e.g. Greater Vancouver Cloth Diaper Exchange) , or make your own using materials that you have in your home (old cotton terry towels, tea towels, flannel receiving blankets, cotton PJ's or t-shirts, etc.), choose less expensive diapering option (prefolds or flats with waterproof cover), line dry diapers whenever possible

- Cloth diapering support - join a local cloth diaper circle; seek assistance from experienced cloth diapering parents within your own community

For more information or to join a circle meeting to connect and learn from other cloth diapering parents, visit [www.vancouverdiapercircle.ca](http://www.vancouverdiapercircle.ca) or [www.facebook.com/realdiapercirclevancouver](https://www.facebook.com/realdiapercirclevancouver)

To apply for a cloth diaper loan through Cloth for a Cause, visit [www.clothforacause.org](http://www.clothforacause.org)